This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

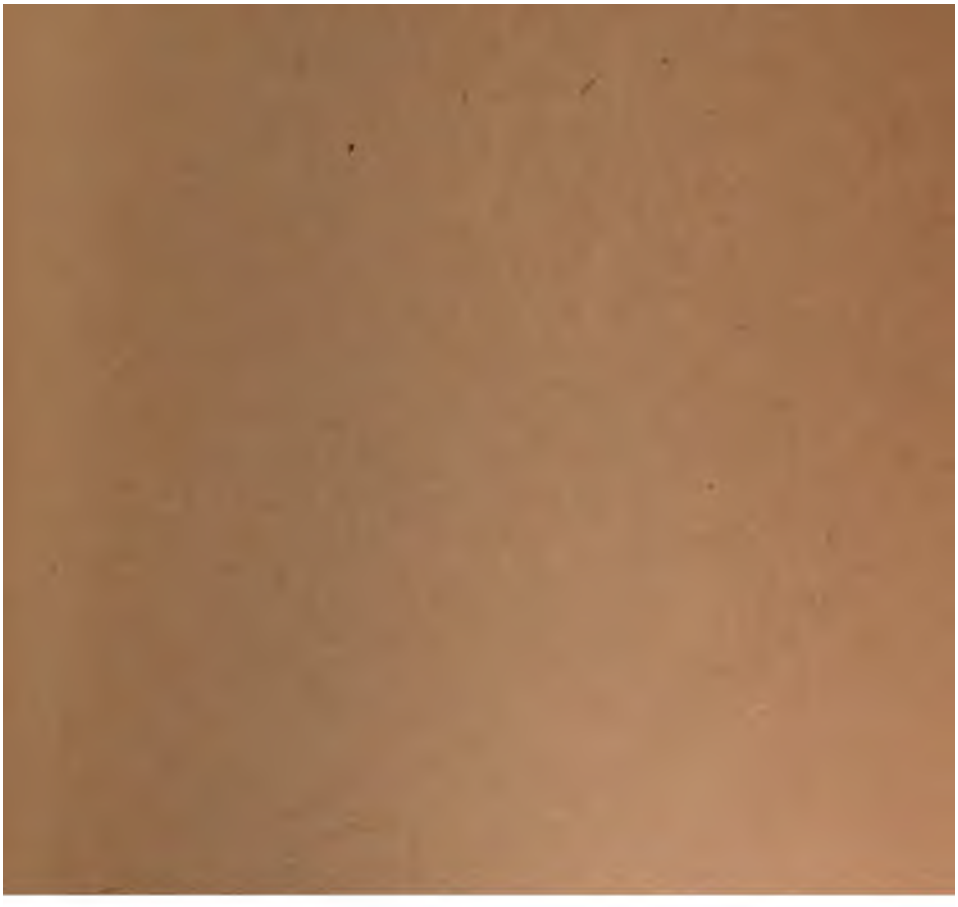
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 119 150 022

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



3.00

THE WRITINGS

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON

VOL. XI.

1785–1790

308
W318
N.11

Of this Letter-press Edition
750 Copies have been Printed for Sale

No. 577

G. P. Putnam's Sons

September, 1891

THE WRITINGS

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON

COLLECTED AND EDITED

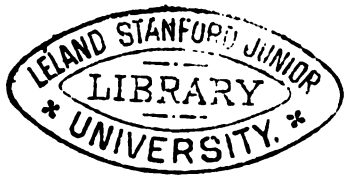
BY

WORTHINGTON CHAUNCEY FORD

VOL. XI.

1785–1790

NEW YORK AND LONDON
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
The Knickerbocker Press
1891



A12745

Press of
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York

CONTENTS OF VOLUME XI.

1785.

PAGE

To James Warren, October 7th 1

Doubts on the ability of the States to use the opportunity—Jealousy of Congress—Great resources at hand—Foreign commerce—Need of a controlling head.

To Patrick Henry, October 29th 4

The Potomac and James shares—His uniform policy not to receive pecuniary recompense for public service—Wishes to be allowed to apply the shares to some object of a public nature.

To George William Fairfax, November 10th . . 6

Education of Custis—A preceptor wanted—Requirements and wages—Gentlemen of the cloth—Progress of the navigation companies—His wish for a trained farmer—Fairfax's estate.

To Lund Washington, November 20th . . . 10

The plans of George Augustine Washington—Overseer at Mount Vernon—A grateful sense of his services.

To James Madison, November 30th 11

Revision of the laws—Proposition to give Congress regulation of the commercial system—Public faith—Port and assize bills—Pennsylvania and internal improvements.

To Alexander Hamilton, December 11th . . . 14

Prejudice against the Cincinnati carried to an unreasonable length—Fears of the people not yet removed—Baron Steuben.

To the Trustees of the Alexandria Academy, December 17th 16

His intentions to endow a school in Alexandria—Offers an annuity—Suggestions on its application.

1786.

PAGE

To Benjamin Lincoln, February 6th 18

The fitness of Mr. Lear—Duties to be performed by him.

To Samuel Purviance, March 10th 19

The settlements on the Kanhawa—Navigation of the stream—Convenient points of settlement—Political consequences—Nature of the soil.

To Colonels Fitzgerald and Gilpin, March 31st . . 22

Brindley and Harris view the Great Falls—Suggestions—A professional man much wanted—Mr. Brindley may be available.

To Robert Morris, April 12th 24

The Quakers and their agitation on slavery—Mischievous and illegal conduct of their society—He is himself strong in favor of abolishing slavery—Oppressive features of the movement.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, May 10th . . . 26

Policy of Great Britain towards the States—Remedy must come in time when the evils are more severely felt—Impost and commercial regulation—A proposed meeting of commissioners—General meeting also proposed—British occupation of the western ports—The Spanish jacks and asses—Philanthropic scheme of the Marquis and his Cayenne estate—Abolition of slavery in the States—Jefferson.

To John Jay, May 18th 30

The Littlepage affair—Errors to be corrected in the national government—More wickedness than ignorance in our councils—A general convention—Fallen from high estate—Want of virtue.

To Henry L. Charton, May 20th 32

Description of his western lands—Terms upon which he would sell.

To James Tilghman, June 5th 37

Death of Tench Tilghman—His correspondence with the New York committee—Sympathy for Asgill's position—Falsity of the gibbet story—Ill return by Asgill for his solicitude.

To Henry Lee, June 18th 41

The navigation of the Mississippi—Develop our own waterways—Claims ought not to be prematurely urged.

PAGE

To William Grayson, July 26th 43
Small attendance in Congress, and its cause—The land claims of Connecticut—The land ordinance of Congress—Infraction of the treaty by the States.

To Wakelin Welch, July — 46
Directs sale of bank stock—Interest on funds—Only desires equal treatment with others.

To the Chevalier de la Luzerne, August 1st . . 48
Ill-conduct of the States—Signs of a better spirit—Unfavorable picture of America current in Europe—The attitude of the British.

To Thomas Jefferson, August 1st 50
Costume of the statue—Domestic intelligence—Deaths of Greene, McDougall, and Tilghman.

To John Jay, August 1st 53
Violation of the treaty—Work for the future—The fear of investing Congress with adequate powers—Requisition a perfect nullity—Tendency to monarchical government—His own interest in public affairs—Neglect of his recommendations.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, August 15th . . 56
Irksome nature of his correspondence—Nations governed by interest—Mutual interests of America and France—Basis of a commerce between the two countries—The arrogant expectations of Britain—Experience demonstrates their error—General reflections on commerce—Late treaties favor a liberal policy.

To David Humphreys, September 1st . . . 60
Documents relative to Asgill—Gordon's connection with the matter—One unanswered question.

To John Francis Mercer, September 9th . . . 62
Desires to have slavery abolished—Military certificates—Pressed for money.

To William Triplett, September 25th . . . 64
A misunderstanding regarding his intentions in purchasing Mrs. French's land—His true meaning—Offers to arbitrate—Value of the plantation.

To Bushrod Washington, September 30th . . . 69
Patriotic societies—Is averse to merely local institutions—Their conduct in Massachusetts.

PAGE

To George Augustine Washington, October 25th . 72
An offer of land for a home—Not a contingency, but a permanency—Wishes them to live with him.

To Henry Lee, October 31st 76
Commotions in the eastern States—His mortification—Influence is no government—A call for decision—Government must defend itself—The navigation of the Mississippi.

To James Madison, November 5th 80
Paper money—National character and government require earnest attention—Virginia can set the example—Knox on the Massachusetts troubles—Fulfilling the evil predictions of Europe Evidence of a want of energy in the government.

To Bushrod Washington, November 15th . . . 83
The Patriotic Society once more—Relation of representative to constituent—State and national interests—As to "commutables"—Experience during the war—Failure to notice the inefficiency of the confederation—Aims of the society.

To James Madison, November 18th 86
Good conduct of the assembly—Would obey a call to attend the Convention, but had already declined meeting of the Cincinnati.

To Fielding Lewis, December 4th 88
His disrespectful conduct—Future of Rectortown.

To P. Marsteller, December 15th 89
Goods at vendue—Directions for purchasing—Allowances and articles—Damaged goods.

To James Madison, December 16th 92
Reasons for not attending the meeting of the Cincinnati—Objections raised to the institution—Changes in the constitution and their reception—His own attitude and embarrassment—Arguments against commutables.

To Edmund Randolph, December 21st . . . 97
Wishes another to be appointed in his place as delegate to the Convention.

To David Humphreys, December 26th . . . 98
His publication on Asgill—The insurrection in Massachusetts—Wishes for information—His position towards the Convention—The Annapolis meeting—There must be no second failure.

PAGE

To Henry Knox, December 26th 103
The Massachusetts insurrection—Combustibles in every State—Why did the eastern States neglect the Annapolis meeting?—Maryland and paper money—Death of Greene perhaps fortunate for him—Tumults should be quickly suppressed—Influence and agency of Great Britain.

1787.

To Bushrod Washington, January 10th 107
Death of John Augustine Washington—Will render what service he is able.

To Henry Knox, February 3d 108
Weakness in government will produce anarchy—Does not intend to attend the Convention—Wishes his views on the propriety of his being present—State sovereignty a possible bar to reform.

To Charles Washington, February 14th . . . 112
Estate of his brother Samuel—Suit of Alexander—His own want of money.

To Mrs. Mary Washington, February 15th . . 114
Demands upon his purse—Is willing to pay what is due—Is determined to have nothing more to do with her plantation—His payments and losses not appreciated—Advises her to break up housekeeping—Reasons why she should not reside at Mount Vernon—An adequate income obtainable—On what depends happiness.

To Thomas Stone, February 16th 119
The contest over paper money in Maryland—Is opposed to such an expedient—Debtors may be benefited.

To David Humphreys, March 8th 121
His attendance on the conventions—His refusal may be misinterpreted—Wishes to know the general opinion.

To John Jay, March 10th 124
Defects of the confederation—Thirst for power and sovereignty by the States—Is anxious to try the Convention.

To Major General Benjamin Lincoln, March 23d . 127
Suppression of the tumults in Massachusetts—The disfranchising act.

PAGE

To Edmund Randolph, March 28th 128
Had declined the appointment to the Convention—Has determined to accept—The meeting of the Cincinnati—Wishes a decided representation without himself.

To James Madison, March 31st 130
His correspondence with him—The recommendation of the Convention by Congress—Infractions of the treaty—Monarchical ideas—Work of reform to be attempted—Believes coercion must be resorted to—Bad policy of Massachusetts—Prospects of the Convention—Vermont.

To Henry Knox, April 2d 136
In doubt whether to attend Convention—Partial representation or cramped powers fatal—The Cincinnati—Action of the State societies—His health.

To Henry Knox, April 27th 138
Summoned to Fredericksburg—Will be prevented from meeting the Cincinnati—Sends papers to be submitted.

To Lund Washington, May 7th 140
His want for money.

Diary during the Constitutional Convention . . 140
May—September.

To Thomas Jefferson, May 30th 156
The Encyclopedia on the Cincinnati—Palpable mistakes in the narration—His own share since the foundation of the society—Reasons for again accepting the presidency—The business of the Convention.

To David Stuart, July 1st 159
Scandalous conduct of Rhode Island—Hope that the Convention will produce good measures—Cause of the national weakness—Impossible to please all.

To Alexander Hamilton, July 10th 162
Almost despairs of a favorable issue—Croakings of those opposed to an energetic government.

To Richard Henry Lee, July 19th 163
The navigation of the Mississippi—Interest of the west to trade through the eastern ports.

To Patrick Henry, September 24th 164
Sends a copy of the proposed Constitution—Wishes it had been more perfect, but desires its adoption—A failure to agree upon a measure would have produced anarchy.

PAGE

To David Humphreys, October 10th 166

Constitution not free from imperfections—Wishes its adoption by a larger majority—Much depends upon the gazette publications—Opposition in the southern and western counties of Virginia.

To James Madison, October 10th 168

The endorsement of the Constitution by Congress—Opposition of Mason and Lee—The sentiment in Virginia—The policy of Mason—Hopes he will be in the State convention—The position of the Governor.

To Henry Knox, October — 171

Severe drought—Activity of the opponents of the Constitution—Questions to be solved—Effect of Mason's and Randolph's refusing to sign.

To Alexander Hamilton, October 18th 173

His dispute with Governor Clinton—His service as aid-de-camp.

To James Madison, October 22d 174

Position of the Constitution before the Virginia Assembly—Pinckney on the Mississippi.

To Mathew Carey, October 29th 176

His request for a loan—His own wants prevent.

To Archibald Johnston, October 30th 177

Cannot permit shooting on his lands.

To Arthur Young, November 1st 178

Condition of farming in Virginia—General practice in cultivating tobacco—Land has been ruined—Cropping being introduced—Prices of products.

To James Madison, November 5th 180

The Constitution in the Assembly—The situation in Maryland.

To Bushrod Washington, November 10th . . . 182

The opposition to the Constitution—Only question to be decided is the policy of uniting—Each State has some objection—Concessions are necessary—What will the opponents advise, if nine States ratify?—Constitution open to amendment—Power under the Constitution will always be with the people—As great evils follow too great jealousy as a want of it—Finances of the State—Impolicy and injustice of commutable taxes—Conduct in the Assembly.

PAGE

To Thomas Johnson, November 22d 187
Rumsey's scheme and the application of steam—Fitch's claims.

To David Stuart, November 30th 188
Opposition to the Constitution gaining ground—His own opinion unshaken—The *Federalist*—The Potomac Company—Certificates and commutable taxes.

To James Madison, December 7th 191
The *Federalist* essays sent to Richmond for republication—The Constitution before the State conventions—Reported change of Jay—The progress of the navigation works—Intelligence from the Assembly—Lee's letter to the governor.

To Colonel Thomas Lewis, December 25th . . 195
Settling of the western lands—Wishes some persons to act as his agent—Offers him the task—Outline of what is to be done—Conditions of rental.

1788.

To Thomas Jefferson, January 1st 200
Opening a communication between Lake Erie and the Ohio—Choice of methods—The plan of government and its reception by the people—Its position in Virginia—Affairs in France—America not to be involved in European wars.

To Edmund Randolph, January 8th 204
The Constitution and its amendment—Too many differences of opinion to be reconciled—The instrument the best obtainable.

To Colonel Frederick Weissenfels, January 10th . 206
Is unable to approach Congress in his behalf.

To James Madison, January 10th 207
Opinion in Virginia on the Constitution uncertain—Richard Henry Lee and his brother—In the debating club—General news.

To Charles Carter, January 12th 209
Publication of a private letter—Annoyance that it should have been made.

To Jonathan Trumbull, February 5th . . . 211
The Constitution in Connecticut and Massachusetts—Opposition in Virginia.

To James Madison, February 5th 213
European intelligence—Effect of a rejection of the Constitution by Massachusetts—Publication of an expression of his—The *Federalist*.

PAGE

To the Chevalier de la Luzerne, February 7th . . 215
Words of parting—High sense of his abilities and conduct while minister.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, February 7th . . 217
His introduction of Moustier—The new Constitution—Its framing little short of a miracle—Some points worthy of notice—Based upon virtue in the people—Checks against the introduction of tyranny—Proposals for another convention—Why he is opposed—The Constitution in the States—Emigration to the western country—European matters—Jefferson.

To Alexander Spotswood, February 13th . . . 222
Pleasures of agriculture—Drills and his own experience—Cropping—Agricultural societies.

To Samuel Griffin, February 20th 226
His appointment as chancellor of William and Mary College.

To Benjamin Lincoln, February 28th . . . 228
The result in Massachusetts—Its influence in other States.

To James Madison, March 2d 230
The effect of Massachusetts' policy on Virginia—Is pleased that he will be in the State convention—The king of France.

To Samuel Hanson, March 18th 232
Care of his wards—Complaints made by them.

To the Count de Moustier, March 26th . . . 234
His disquietude not due to intentional neglect—America and its people extremely well affected to France—Commercial connection of the two nations—Advantages enjoyed by the British merchants.

To Henry Knox, March 30th 238
Ill conduct of New Hampshire—Its influence on the Virginia elections—Sentiment of the State outlined—The Mississippi question.

To Charles Lee, April 4th 240
Unable to pay his accounts with the James River Company—His great want of money—Certificates and public securities—Injustice in measures for receiving them in payment of taxes—Certificate for an executed negro—Juggling in securities.

To James Wilson, April 4th 243
The violence of faction in Pennsylvania—The approaching convention in Virginia.

PAGE

To Thomas Johnson, April 20th 244
There should be no adjournment in the Maryland convention—A plot to reject—Example of New Hampshire—Opinion in Virginia—His wish in this interference.

To the Marquis de Chastellux, April 25th . . . 246
His marriage—War and the great commandment—The course of the Constitution.

To John Armstrong, April 25th 249
A suggestion that his retirement may be interrupted—The influence of example—Importance of first measures—Amendment of the Constitution—Opposition in Pennsylvania—May be productive of good—Education in America.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, April 28th . . . 254
Privileges granted to Americans trading with France—Discrimination probable against Great Britain—Striving after a system—The Constitution before the States—Attitude in Virginia His idea a good one—Conciliatory policy in Massachusetts—Suggested changes—The President and rotation in office—Probability of his filling the office—Maryland has ratified.

To the Count de Rochambeau, April 28th . . 259
Death of De Grasse—Unrest among European powers.

To Benjamin Lincoln, May 2d 261
Maryland's acceptance of the Constitution will have great influence in Virginia—Spirit of insurrection in Massachusetts.

To George Steptoe Washington, May 5th . . . 263
Complaints of misconduct—Must defer to Mr. Hanson's advice—Formation of character.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, May 28th . . . 264
Introducing Joel Barlow—Protection of poets by warriors—American poetical genius—Political fate of America to be decided in a few weeks.

To James Madison, June 8th 268
Auspicious opening of the convention—Ability and property on the side of the Constitution—Jay's pamphlet.

To John Jay, June 8th 269
Prospects of the Constitution—What has been done in the Virginia convention—The beginning as auspicious as could possibly have been expected.

To William Smith and others, June 8th . . . 272
The ship *Federalist*—Good wishes for Baltimore.

PAGE

To Henry Knox, June 17th 274
Accession of South Carolina and proceedings in the Virginia convention—Kentucky opposition and its cause—Fear of an adjournment—The anti-federalists astonished—Reported majority in New York against the Constitution—New Hampshire.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, June 18th . . . 277
The attitude of king and parliaments in France—The Constitution in South Carolina and Virginia—Fears of property in the south—Happy situation of the country.

To Richard Henderson, June 19th 280
Prospects in America for immigrants—Lands in the west—The mission of Barlow—Writers on America.

To Charles Carter, June 28th 284
The tomb of John Dandridge.

To Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, June 28th . . 284
The Constitution in South Carolina and Virginia—Celebration in Alexandria—The situation in New York.

To Benjamin Lincoln, June 29th 287
Capabilities of America for good government—The contest in Virginia—Attitude of Henry—Prospects in other States.

To John Jay, July 18th 289
Opposition to the Constitution in New York—Regulations of the post office unfavorable to the transmission of intelligence—Effect at the present juncture—Prejudice against stages.

To Noah Webster, July 31st 293
The campaign of 1781—How the plan was modified by circumstances—Virginia became the objective point of the combined operations—No risk to be encountered—Deceptions practised.

To James Madison, August 3d 295
New York ratifies—Place for the new Congress to meet.

To George Steptoe Washington, August 6th . . 297
His unjustifiable behavior—Proper means of obtaining justice.

To Charles Pettit, August 16th 299
Defects in proposed system may be remedied—Injudicious conduct of the opposition—Not affected by the shafts of malice—His wish for retirement.

PAGE

To John Beale Bordley, August 17th . . . 301

The quality of wheat—Rotation of crops—Alternation of grain and fallow crops—His own arrangement of a six-field rotation—Contrast of the respective yields—Sowing and threshing machines.

To the Count de Moustier, August 17th . . . 306

Commerce between the United States and France—The tobacco contract and monopolies—French woollens—Direct imports and exports—Trade must depend upon facility for making remittances—Increased use of French brandy and wines—Carrying trade—Trade with the French islands—Course of American trade—What influences are at work to favor French interests.

To Benjamin Lincoln, August 28th 312

Minot's *History*—Evil effects of local interests on federal concerns—Rumors of an attempt to secure an anti-federal Congress—His interpretation of the New York letter.

To Alexander Hamilton, August 28th . . . 314

Publius—The letter of the New York convention—As to his accepting an election to the presidency.

To Thomas Jefferson, August 31st 317

The canal of Languedoc—Prospect of the Virginia ventures—European politics—Paul Jones—Proposals for managing the American debt—His view of the new Constitution—Bright prospects for the nation.

To Henry Lee, September 22d 323

The new government—Solemnity of the crisis—True policy of the friends of the Constitution—Real meaning of the attempt to secure immediate amendments—His possible election.

To James Madison, September 23d 327

Congress should meet at Philadelphia—Tactics of the opposition.

To Alexander Hamilton, October 3d 328

Delicacy of his situation—Can the government be carried into execution without his aid?—His intentions and purpose—Prospects of an opposition.

To Benjamin Lincoln, October 26th 333

Fears and hopes of the new government—Its supporters must not be lulled into security—Candidates—His own position and wishes—The Vice-President.

PAGE

To Mathew Carey, October 27th 339
The extract from a letter attributed to him is spurious.

To Arthur Young, December 4th 340
Usefulness of agricultural pursuits—His quality of wool—Spanish jacks—Advantages of mules over horses—Ploughs and barns—Why his experiments have been without result—Does not wish his letters published.

To William Gordon, December 23d 345
Completion of his history—His possible connection with political affairs—The Nicola incident—The new government—A cipher.

1789.

To William Pierce, January 1st 348
The presidency and appointments to office.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, January 29th . . 350
Patriotism not faction prevails in America—Growth of federal sentiments—His attitude towards the presidency—Improved situation of the country—Manufactures.

To Benjamin Lincoln, January 31st 354
Rumored action in Massachusetts—Misrepresentation and falsehood prevalent—Progress of federal ideas in Virginia—John Adams.

To Samuel Powel, February 5th 356
End of political manœuvres against the Constitution—Virginia probably federal—Insanity of the British king.

To Thomas Jefferson, February 13th . . . 357
Manufactures and inland navigation—Cotton and glass—Communication between the Ohio and Lake Erie—Progress of the works on the Potomac—Prospects of the Great Falls.

To Harry Innes, March 2d 361
Intelligence from Kentucky—Wishes a continuance of the favors—Rumored plot of separation.

To Richard Conway, March 4th 363
His great want of money—Wishes to borrow.

To Benjamin Harrison, March 9th 364
The temper of the opposition—Does not wish to appear as a partisan—Publication of his views—His application for an office.

PAGE

To George Steptoe Washington, March 23d . . . 369
Some advisory hints—Acquisition of useful knowledge—Industry and amusements—Good company—Economy—Dress—An offer from Dr. Craik.

To James Madison, March 30th 374
Delay in obtaining a quorum—Wishes lodgings to be engaged—Wishes to be in an independent situation.

To Thomas Green, March 31st 375
Labor paid for, and withheld, robbery—Value of a good name—His love of drink—The expense and danger.

To Henry Knox, April 1st 379
Feels like a culprit going to execution—Can only promise integrity and firmness.

To John Langdon, April 14th 380
Has received notice of his election—Will set out at once.

Inaugural Speech, April 30th 381

To Edward Rutledge, May 5th 388
The sacrifices he has made—Fears of his ability to meet expectations.

To James Madison, May 12th 390
As to forms—Principal object to leave sufficient time for the performance of his duties—Queries submitted.

To Mary Wooster, May 21st 393
Sympathy for her misfortunes—His attitude to appointments—What he requires for his own satisfaction.

To Count de Moustier, May 25th 395
Relations between the United States and France—Cannot enter individually into any commercial negotiations—Manner of conducting such business with the executive.

To Mathew Carey, May 29th 399
Extreme annoyance.

To the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, June 8th . . 400
Calls for information on the business of his department.

To James McHenry, July 3d 401
His health—Wish for Dr. Craik's attendance.

To John Jay, July 14th 403
The Spanish negotiations.

PAGE

To Charles Thomson, July 24th 404
His long public service—A testimony of his appreciation—Disposition of the records.

To David Stuart, July 26th 405
Wishes to know public opinion of his acts—Visits and levees—Dignity and respect in office—Invitations—Question of titles—The tonnage bill—Secrecy of the Senate—Claiborn's land and title—Young Nelson.

To James Madison, August 9th 415
Conference with the Senate committee—The real intention of the Senate.

Sentiments Expressed to the Senate Committee on Treaties and Nominations, August 8th and 10th, 417

To James Madison, August — 420
Nominations—Other matters.

To Benjamin Lincoln, August 11th 421
A proposed treaty with the Indians—Will he be one of the commission to treat?

To James Craik, September 8th 424
His health and recent illness—Opposition in politics—The studies of his nephew.

To Mrs. Betty Lewis, September 13th 426
Death of his mother—The settlement of her estate—His own share—His advances to the estate—Sale of his Fredericksburg lots.

To Benjamin Franklin, September 23d, . . . 431
Sympathy for his pain—Appreciation of his services.

To Edmund Randolph, September 27th . . . 432
Importance of the judiciary—Wishes to appoint him the Attorney-General—The salary.

To Gouverneur Morris, October 13th 434
The government organized—The revolution in France—Wishes some table ornaments and wine coolers.

To Thomas Jefferson, October 13th 438
Nominates him for the Department of State—The French appointment—Roger Alden commended.

To Gouverneur Morris, October 13th 440
Wishes to sound the sentiments of the British court—Commissions him to discuss informally.

PAGE

To Gouverneur Morris, October 13th . . . 441
His mission outlined—Subjects to be mentioned—Posts and negroes—Commercial regulation—Trade with their islands—Exchange of ministers.

To John Hancock, October 23d 444
His reception in Boston.

To Beverley Randolph, November 22d . . . 445
A proposed woollen manufactory in Virginia—Advantage of public encouragement.

To James McHenry, November 30th . . . 447
Maryland appointments.

To Edmund Randolph, November 30th . . . 450
Judicial appointments in Virginia—Rumor that Mr. Wythe had been overlooked—Reasons for appointing Griffin.

To Alexander Hamilton, December 17th . . . 453
Disbursements on account of British prisoners—Lack of proper vouchers may occasion loss—British counterclaims.

To Jabez Bowen, December 27th 454
Cannot give an official opinion on the conduct of Rhode Island—That State stands entirely alone.

1790.

Speech to Congress, January 8th 456

To Catharine Macaulay Graham, January 9th . . 459
Her indulgent partiality towards him—His desire for retirement broken into by a sense of public duty—His station new, and his acts subject to a double interpretation—The actual situation of the country—America independent—Luxury and ostentation to be avoided.

To Charles Pinckney, January 11th 463
The Spanish negotiation—Nothing has occurred since the departure of Gardoqui—Indian affairs—Prompt and decisive measures may become necessary.

To Thomas Jefferson, January 21st 467
Reasons for making a decision on taking office—Importance of the position offered—Duties not so arduous as may be imagined—The nomination well received—Foreign intercourse remains to be organized.

To Edmund Randolph, February 11th 470
Cannot endorse his opinion—Congress must pass enabling acts.

PAGE

To David Stuart, March 28th 471

Jealousies poisoning the minds of the southern people—Different interests of sections have always existed—Local divisions in States and counties—Spirit of accommodation should prevail—Benefit of united action—Will separation occasion harmony?—Influence of the gazettes—Discrimination to public creditors—Assumption and slavery.

To the Marquis de la Luzerne, April 29th . . 475

An interchange of felicitations—Prosperous situation of the country—Not indifferent to the welfare of the French nation—Rumors of European wars—Conditions of advancement.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, June 3d . . . 478

Wishes for success—A good temper prevails in the Union—Elements of prosperity everywhere visible—Extension of trade enterprise—Personal.

To David Stuart, June 15th 481

Discontent in Virginia—Action of Congress criticised—Some ill-advised proceedings—Assumption of the State debts—His reception days and the forms used.

To Clement Biddle, July 20th 490

Inquires about certain farms offered for sale—His intentions and needs.

To the Marquis de Lafayette, August 11th . . 493

The key of the Bastile—Difficult position of France—What has been done by Congress—Strict neutrality in European broils, the true policy of the United States—The threatened contest between England and Spain.

To Henry Knox, August 13th 499

Matters to be submitted to him before his departure—Indian problems.

To Alexander Hamilton, October 10th . . . 501

Beckwith's hint and its motive—His speech to Congress.

To Tobias Lear, November 14th 503

The President's house—What rent should be paid—Alterations to be made.

To Henry Knox, Nov. 19th 506

Misconduct of Harmar—Obstacles to the success of the expedition.

To George Steptoe Washington, December 5th . 508

Cost of his education—Advice upon his conduct.

THE WRITINGS OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

TO JAMES WARREN.

MOUNT VERNON, 7 October, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

The assurances of your friendship, after a silence of more than six years, are extremely pleasing to me. Friendship, formed under the circumstances that ours commenced are not easily eradicated; and I can assure you, that mine has undergone no diminution. Every occasion, therefore, of renewing it will give me pleasure, and I shall be happy at all times to hear of your welfare.

The war, as you have very justly observed, has terminated most advantageously for America, and a fair field is presented to our view; but I confess to you freely, my dear Sir, that I do not think we possess wisdom or justice enough to cultivate it properly. Illiberality, jealousy, and local policy mix too much in all our public councils for the good government of the Union. In a word, the confederation appears to me to be little more than a shadow without the substance, and Congress a nugatory body, their ordinances being little attended to. To me it is a solecism in politics, indeed it is one of the most ex-

traordinary things in nature, that we should confederate as a nation, and yet be afraid to give the rulers of that nation who are the creatures of our making, appointed for a limited and short duration, and who are amenable for every action and recallable at any moment, and are subject to all the evils, which they may be instrumental in producing, sufficient powers to order and direct the affairs of the same. By such policy as this the wheels of government are clogged, and our brightest prospects, and that high expectation, which was entertained of us by the wondering world, are turned into astonishment; and from the high ground on which we stood, we are descending into the vale of confusion and darkness.

That we have it in our power to become one of the most respectable nations upon earth, admits, in my humble opinion, of no doubt, if we would but pursue a wise, just, and liberal policy towards one another, and keep good faith with the rest of the world. That our resources are ample and increasing, none can deny; but, while they are grudgingly applied, or not applied at all, we give a vital stab to public faith, and shall sink, in the eyes of Europe, into contempt.

It has long been a speculative question among philosophers and wise men, whether foreign commerce is of real advantage to any country; that is, whether the luxury, effeminacy, and corruptions, which are introduced along with it, are counterbalanced by the convenience and wealth which it brings with it. But the decision of this question is of very little importance to us. We have abundant reason to be

convinced, that the spirit for trade, which pervades these States, is not to be restrained. It behoves us then to establish just principles; and this, any more than other matters of national concern, cannot be done by thirteen heads differently constructed and organized. The necessity, therefore, of a controlling power is obvious; and why it should be withheld is beyond my comprehension.

The Agricultural Society, lately established in Philadelphia, promises extensive usefulness, if it is prosecuted with spirit. I wish most sincerely, that every State in the Union would institute similar ones; and that these societies would correspond fully and freely with each other, and communicate all useful discoveries founded on practice, with a due attention to climate, soil, and seasons to the public.

* * * It would afford me great pleasure to go over those grounds in your State, with a mind more at ease than when I travelled them in 1775 and 1776, and to unite in congratulating on the happy change with those characters, who participated of the anxious moments we passed in those days, and for whom I entertain a sincere regard; but I do not know whether to flatter myself with the enjoyment of it. The deranged state of my affairs, from an absence and total neglect of them for almost nine years, and a pressure of other matters, allow me little leisure for gratifications of this sort. Mrs. Washington offers her compliments and best wishes to Mrs. Warren, to which be pleased to add those of, dear Sir, yours, &c.

TO PATRICK HENRY, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA,

MOUNT VERNON, 29 October, 1785.

SIR,

Your Excellency having been pleased to transmit to me a copy of the act, appropriating to my benefit certain shares in the companies for opening the navigation of James and Potomac Rivers, I take the liberty of returning to the General Assembly, through your hands, the profound and grateful acknowledgments inspired by so signal a mark of their beneficent intentions towards me. I beg you, Sir, to assure them, that I am filled on this occasion with every sentiment, which can flow from a heart warm with love for my country, sensible to every token of its approbation and affection, and solicitous to testify in every instance a respectful submission to its wishes.

With these sentiments in my bosom, I need not dwell on the anxiety I feel in being obliged in this instance to decline a favor, which is rendered no less flattering by the manner in which it is conveyed, than it is affectionate in itself. In explaining this observation I pass over a comparison of my endeavors in the public service with the many honorable testimonies of approbation, which have already so far overrated and overpaid them; reciting one consideration only, which supersedes the necessity of recurring to every other.

When I was first called to the station, with which I was honored during the late conflict for our liberties, to the diffidence which I had so many reasons to feel in accepting it, I thought it my duty to join a firm resolution to shut my hand against every pecu-

niary recompense. To this resolution I have invariably adhered, and from it, if I had the inclination, I do not feel at liberty now to depart.

Whilst I repeat, therefore, my fervent acknowledgments to the legislature for their very kind sentiments and intentions in my favor, and at the same time beg them to be persuaded, that a remembrance of this singular proof of their goodness towards me will never cease to cherish returns of the warmest affection and gratitude, I must pray that their act, so far as it has for its object my personal emolument, may not have its effect. But if it should please the General Assembly to permit me to turn the destination of the fund vested in me, from my private emolument, to objects of a public nature, it will be my study in selecting these to prove the sincerity of my gratitude for the honor conferred on me, by preferring such as may appear most subservient to the enlightened and patriotic views of the legislature. With great respect and consideration, I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

[1] After this letter had been read, the legislature passed an act withdrawing the donation, and adding: "That the said shares, with the tolls and profits hereafter accruing therefrom, shall stand appropriated to such objects of a public nature, in such manner and under such distributions, as the said George Washington, by deed during his life, or by his last will and testament, shall direct."—*Hening's Statutes*, vol. xii., p. 44. The letter is printed in the preamble to the statute. In writing to Mr. Madison on the subject, at the time he sent the above letter to the governor, Washington said: "Conceiving it would be better to suggest a wish, than to propose an absolute condition of acceptance, I have so expressed myself to the Assembly; and I shall be obliged to you, not only for information of the result, but (if there is an acquiescence on the part of the country) for your sentiments respecting the appropriations. From what may be said on the occasion, you will learn what will be most pleasing, and of the greatest utility to the public."—October 29th.

"Your letter for the Assembly was laid before them yesterday. I have reason to believe that it was received with every sentiment which could correspond

TO GEORGE WILLIAM FAIRFAX.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 November, 1785.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * * * *

The two youngest children of Mr. Custis—the oldest a girl of six years—the other a boy a little turned of four live with me. They are both promising children; but the latter is a remarkable fine one—and my intention is to give him a liberal education; the rudiments of which shall, if I live, be in my own family. —Having promised this, let me next, my good Sir, ask if it is in your power conveniently, to engage a proper preceptor for him?—at present, and for a year or two to come, much confinement would be improper for him; but this being the period in which I should derive more aid from a man of Letters and an accomptant than at any other, to assist me in my numerous correspondences, and to extricate the latter from the disordered state into which they have been thrown by the war, I could usefully employ him in this manner until his attention should be more immediately required for his pupil.—

Fifty or Sixty pounds Sterling pr. Ann. with board, lodging, washing and mending, *in the family*, is the most my numerous expenditures will allow me to give;

with yours. Nothing passed from which any conjecture could be formed as to the objects which would be most pleasing for the appropriation of the fund. The disposition is, I am persuaded much stronger to acquiesce in your choice, whatever it may be, than to lead or anticipate it. I see no inconveniency in your taking time for a choice that will please yourself. The letter was referred to a committee, which will no doubt make such a report as will give effect to your wishes."—*Madison to Washington*, 11 November, 1785.

but how far it may command the services of a person well qualified to answer the purposes I have mentioned, is not for me to decide. To answer *my* purposes, the Gentleman must be a master of composition, and a good accomptant :—to answer his pupil's, he must be a classical scholar, and capable of teaching the French language grammatically :—the more universal his knowledge is, the better.—

It sometimes happens that very worthy men of the *cloth* come under this description ; men who are advanced in years, and not very comfortable in their circumstances. Such an one, if unencumbered with a family, would be more agreeable to me than a young man just from college—but I except none of good moral character answering my description, if he can be well recommended.—

To you my Dr. Sir, I have offered this my first address ; but if you should think my purposes cannot be subserved in your circle, upon the terms here mentioned ; I beg, in that case, that you will be so obliging as to forward the enclosed letter as it is directed.—This gentleman has written to me upon another subject, & favored me with his lucubrations upon Education, which mark him a man of abilities, at the same time that he is highly spoken of as a teacher, and a person of good character. In Scotland we all know that Education is cheap, and wages not so high as in England :—but I would prefer, on account of the dialect, an Englishman to a Scotchman, for all the purposes I want.

We have commenced our operations on the navigation of this river; and I am happy to inform you, that the difficulties rather vanish than increase as we proceed.—James river is under similar circumstances; and a cut between the waters of Albermarle in No. Carolina, and Elizabeth river in this State, is also in contemplation—and if the whole is effected and I see nothing to prevent it, it will give the greatest and most advantageous inland Navigation to this Country of any in the Union—or I believe, in the world:—for as the Shannondoah, the South branch, Monocasy and Conogocheague are equally capable of great improvement, they will no doubt be immediately attempted; and more than probable a communication by good roads will be opened with the waters to the westward of us; by means of the No. Branch of Potomac, which interlocks with the Cheat river and Yohoghaney (branches of the Monongahela) that empty into the Ohio at Fort Pitt.—The same is equally practicable between James river and the Greenbriar a branch of the Great Kanhawa, which empties into the same river, 300 miles below that place; by means whereof the whole trade of that Territory which is now unfolding to our view, may be drawn into this State—equally productive of political as commercial advantages.

As I never ride to my plantations without seeing something which makes one regret having continued so long in the ruinous mode of farming, which we are in; I beg leave, tho' I am persuaded it will give you trouble, to recall your attention to the request of my

former letter, the duplicate of which you now have.—Miscarriages, and where this is not the case, delays of letters must be my apology for reiterating the matter, that there may be time for decision, before the intervention of another year.

The marriage mentioned in my last is celebrated, but a fit of the gout prevented Colo. Bassett from beeing at it—consequently I am to lay a little longer out of your kind present. Mrs. Washington who has very indifferent health, joins me in the sincerest and best wishes for every blessing which can be bestowed on Mrs. Fairfax and yourself.

With great esteem, &c.

P. S. Since writing the above & foregoing I have seen Mr. Battaile Muse who looks after your Estate; & upon enquiry of him, am authorized to inform you that your negroes, and everything under his care are tolerably well, & your prospect of a crop midling, which is saying a good deal *this year.*

I have the pleasure also to inform you that your Brother and his family were very well a few days ago when I was there, attending the business of the Potomac Company at the Great Falls.

Your Sister and family are likewise well—I saw her three oldest daughters last week—the elder of them, Milly, is on the eve of Matrimony with a Mr. Ogden Throckmorton—a match not very agreeable, it is said, to her friends, & kept off by Mrs. Bushrod 'till her death which happened some three or four months ago—but now is yielded to by her Parents.

TO LUND WASHINGTON.

DEAR LUND, MOUNT VERNON, 20 November, 1785.

I know as little of G: W.s plans or wishes as you do, never having exchanged a word with him upon the subject in my life.—By his Advertisement, and from what has frequently dropped from Fanny, he is desirous of getting a place in this country to live at.—

Before their marriage he and Fanny were both told that it would be very agreeable to Mrs. W. and myself, that they should make this House their home 'till the squalling and trouble of children might become disagreeable.—I have not repeated the matter since, because it was unnecessary—an offer once made is sufficient.—It is hardly to be expected that two people young as they are, with their nearest connexions at extreme points, would like confinement:—and without it, he could not answer my purposes as a Manager or Superintend., unless I had more leisure to attend to my own business; which by the by I shall aim at, let the consequences, in other respects, be as they may.

These however are no reasons for detaining you a moment longer in my employ than suits your interest, or is agreeable to your inclination, and family concerns But as the proposition is new, and hath never been resolved in my mind, it will take some time to digest my own thoughts upon the occasion before it is hinted to another.

In the mean while if I can do with the aids you offer, and for which I sincerely thank you, I will ask

your constant attention no longer than this year—at any rate not longer than the next.—The inexplicitness of this answer cannot, I presume, put you to much if any inconvenience as yet; because retirement from, & not a change of business, is professedly your object.—

However unlucky I may have been in crops, &c. of late years, I shall always retain a grateful sense of your endeavors to serve me;—for as I have repeatedly intimated to you in my Letters from camp, nothing but that entire confidence which I reposed, could have made me easy under an absence of almost nine years from my family and Estate, or could have enabled me, consequently, to have given not only my time, but my whole attention to the public concerns of this Country for that space. I am, &c.[1]

TO JAMES MADISON.

MOUNT VERNON, 30 November, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Receive my thanks for your obliging communications of the 11th. I hear with much pleasure, that the Assembly are engaged seriously in the consideration of the revised laws. A short and simple code in my opinion, though I have the sentiments of some of the gentlemen of the long robe against me, would be productive of happy consequences, and redound to the honor of this or any country, which shall adopt

[1] It was on December 20th that Washington informed Lund that his wish for retiring from the management of Mount Vernon could be gratified. George Augustine Washington came to Mt. Vernon and was placed in charge.

a code so short, plain & simple. I hope the resolutions, which were published for the consideration of the House, respecting the reference of Congress for the regulation of a commercial system, will have passed.[1]

The proposition, in my opinion, is so self-evident, that I confess I am unable to discover wherein lies the weight of objection to the measure. We are either a united people, or we are not so. If the former, let us in all matters of general concern, act as a nation which has a national character to support; if we are not, let us no longer act a farce by pretending to it; for, whilst we are playing a double game, or playing a game between the two, we *never* shall be consistent or respectable, but *may* be the dupes of some powers, and the contempt assuredly of all. In any case, it behoves us to provide good militia laws, and to look well to the execution of them; but if we mean by our conduct, that the States shall act independently of each other, it becomes indispensably necessary, for therein will consist our strength and the respectability of the Union.[2]

[1] "If the States individually were to attempt this, an abortion, or a many headed monster would be the issue."—*Washington to David Stuart*, 30 November, 1785.

[2] "The discussion of them [the commercial propositions] has consumed much time, and though the absolute necessity of some such general system prevailed over all the efforts of its adversaries in the first instance, the stratagem of limiting its duration to a short term has ultimately disappointed our hopes. I think it better to trust to further experience, and even distress, for an adequate remedy, than to try a temporary measure, which may stand in the way of a permanent one, and confirm that transatlantic policy which is founded on our supposed mistrust of Congress and of one another."—*Madison to Washington*, 9 December, 1785.

It is much to be wished that public faith may be held inviolable. Painful is it, even in thought, that attempts should be made to weaken the bands of it. It is a dangerous experiment. Once slacken the reins, and the power is lost. And it is questionable with me, whether the advocates of the measure foresee all its consequences. It is an old adage, that *honesty is the best policy*. This applies to public as well as private life, to States as well as individuals.

I hope the Port and Assize Bills no longer sleep, but are awakened to a happy establishment. The first, with some alterations, would in my judgment be productive of great good to this country. Without it, the trade, thereof, I conceive, will ever labor and languish. With respect to the second, if it institutes a speedier administration of justice, it is equally desirable. * * *

From the complexion of the debates in the Pennsylvania Assembly, it should seem as if that legislature intended their assent to the proposition from the States of Virginia and Maryland, (respecting a road to the Youghiogany,) should be on the condition that permission be given by the latter to open a communication between the Chesapeake and Delaware, by the way of the rivers Elk and Christiana ; which I am sure will never be obtained, if the Baltimore interest can give effectual opposition. The directors of the Potomac navigation have sent to the delegates of this county, to be laid before the Assembly, a petition (which sets forth the reasons) for relief in the depth of the canals, which it may be found necessary

to open at the Great and Little Falls of the river. As public economy and private interest equally prompt the measure, and no possible disadvantage, that we can see, will attend granting the prayer of it, we flatter ourselves no opposition will be given to it. To save trouble, to expedite the business, and to obtain uniformity without delay, or an intercourse between the two Assemblies on so trifling a matter, we have taken the liberty of sending the draft of a bill to members of both Assemblies, which, if approved, will be found exactly similar. With the greatest esteem and regard, I am, Dear Sir, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 11 December, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I have been favored with your letter of the 25th of November by Major Farlie.

Sincerely do I wish that the several State Societies had, or would, adopt the alterations that were recommended by the General meeting in May, 1784.—I then thought, and have had no cause since to change my opinion, that if the Society of the Cincinnati mean to live in peace with the rest of their fellow citizens, they must subscribe to the alterations which were at that time adopted.

That the jealousies of, and prejudices against this Society were carried to an unwarrantable length, I will readily grant. And that *less* than was done, ought to have removed the fears which had been imbibed, I am as clear in, as I am that it would not have

done it. But it is a matter of little moment whether the alarm which seized the public mind was the result of foresight—envy and jealousy—or a disordered imagination; the effect of perseverance would have been the same; wherein there would have been found an equivalent for the separation of the Interests, which (from my best information, not from one state only but from many) would inevitably have taken place?

The fears of the people are not yet removed, they only sleep, and a very little matter will set them afloat again. Had it not been for the predicament we stood in with respect to the foreign officers, and the charitable part of the Institution, I should on that occasion, as far as my voice would have gone, have endeavored to convince the narrow-minded part of our Countrymen that the Amor Patriæ was much stronger in our breasts than theirs—and that our conduct through the whole of the business was actuated by nobler and more generous sentiments than were apprehended, by abolishing the Society at once, with a declaration of the causes, and the purity of its intention. But the latter may be interesting to many, and the former, is an inseparable bar to such a step.[1]

I am sincerely concerned to find by your letter that the Baron is again in straightened circumstances—I

[1] "I have received the pamphlet, which you were so obliging as to send me, entitled '*Considerations on the Order of Cincinnatus*, by the Count de Mirabeau.' I thank you, my good Sir, for this instance of your attention, but wish you had taken time to have perused it first, as I have not yet had leisure to give it a reading. I thought, as most others seemed to think, that all the exceptionable parts of that institution had been done away at the last general meeting; but, with those who are disposed to cavil, or who have the itch of writing

am much disinclined to ask favors of Congress, but if I knew what the objects of his wishes are, I should have much pleasure in rendering him any services in my power with such members of that body as I now and then corrispond with.—I had flattered myself, from what was told me some time ago, that Congress had made a final settlement with the Baron much to his satisfaction. * * *

TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ALEXANDRIA ACADEMY.

17 December, 1785.

GENTLEMEN,

That I may be perspicuous and avoid misconception, the proposition which I wish to lay before you is committed to writing, and is as follows:

It has long been my intention to invest, at my death, one thousand pounds current money of this State in the hands of trustees, the interest only of which to be applied in instituting a school in the town of Alexandria, for the purpose of educating orphan children, who have no other resource, or the children of such indigent parents, as are unable to give it; the objects to be considered of and determined by the

strongly upon them, nothing can be made to suit their palates. The best way, therefore, to disconcert and defeat them, is to take no notice of their publications. All else is but food for declamation.

"There is not, I conceive, an unbiassed mind, that would refuse the officers of the late army the right of associating for the purpose of establishing a fund for the support of the poor and distressed of their fraternity, when many of them, it is well known, are reduced to their last shifts by the ungenerous conduct of their country in not adopting more vigorous measures to render their certificates productive. That charity is all that remains of the original institution, none, who will be at the trouble of reading it, can deny."—*Washington to Samuel Vaughan*, 30 November, 1785.

trustees for the time being, when applied to by the parents or friends of the children, who have pretensions to this provision. It is not in my power at this time to advance the above sum; but that a measure, that may be productive of good, may not be delayed, I will until my death, or until it shall be more convenient for my estate to advance the principal, pay the interest thereof, to wit, fifty pounds annually.

Under this state of the matter, I submit to your consideration the practicability and propriety of blending the two institutions together, so as to make one seminary under the direction of the president, visitors, or such other establishment as to you shall seem best calculated to promote the objects in view, and for preserving order, regularity, and good conduct in the academy. My intention, as I have before intimated, is, that the principal sum shall never be broken in upon; the interest only to be applied for the purposes above-mentioned. It was also my intention to apply the latter to the sole purpose of education, and of that kind of education, which would be most extensively useful to people of the lower class of citizens, namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic, so as to fit them for mechanical purposes.

The fund, if confined to this, would comprehend more subjects; but, if you shall be of opinion, that the proposition I now offer can be made to comport with the institution of the school which is already established, and approve of an incorporation of them in the manner before mentioned, and thereafter, upon a full consideration of the matter, should conceive

that this fund would be more advantageously applied towards clothing and schooling, than solely to the latter, I will acquiesce in it most cheerfully ; and shall be ready, (as soon as the trustees are established upon a permanent footing,) by deed or other instrument of writing, to vest the aforesaid sum of one thousand pounds in them and their successors for ever, with powers to direct and manage the same agreeably to these my declared intentions.[1]

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 6 February, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 4th of January never reached me till yesterday, or the receipt of it should have had an earlier acknowledgment. Let me, in the first place, thank you for your kind attention to my inquiries; and in the next, pray you to know precisely from Mr. Lear upon what terms he would come to me. I am not inclined to leave matters of this kind to after discussion or misconception. Whatever agreement is previously made shall be pointedly fulfilled on my part, which will prevent every cause of complaint on his.

Mr. Lear, or any other who may come into my family in the blended characters of preceptor to the children, and as a clerk or private secretary to me, will sit at my table, will live as I live, will mix with the company who resort to the house, and will be

[1] The above proposal was accepted by the trustees of the Alexandria Academy, who engaged on their part to do all in their power to comply with the benevolent intention of the donor. It was in their opinion best to appropriate the fund to the institution as then established, and wholly for schooling.

treated in every respect with civility and proper attention. He will have his washing done in the family, and may have his linen and stockings mended by the maids of it. The duties, which will be required of him, are generally such as appertain to the offices above mentioned. The first will be very trifling, till the children are a little more advanced; and the latter will be equally so, as my correspondences decline (which I am endeavoring to effect), and after my accounts and other old matters are brought up. To descend more minutely into his avocations I am unable, because occasional matters may call for particular services; but nothing derogatory will be asked or expected. After this explanation of my wants, I request Mr. Lear would mention the annual sum he will expect for these services, and I will give him a decided answer by the return of the stages, which now carry the mail and travel quick. A good hand, as well as a proper diction, would be a recommendation on account of fair entries, and for the benefit of the children who will have to copy after it.[1] * * *

TO SAMUEL PURVIANCE, ESQ.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 March, 1786.

SIR:

Your Letter of the 6th instant, is this moment put into my hands; was it in my power I would cheerfully answer your queries respecting the settle–

[1] An arrangement was made satisfactory to both parties; and Mr. Lear, a young gentleman from Portsmouth in New Hampshire, who had recently graduated at Harvard University, went to Mount Vernon and became General Washington's Secretary, at an annual salary of two hundred dollars.

ments on the Kanhawa ; the nature of the water and quality of the soil.

But of the first, I only know from information that Colo. Lewis is settled there, from his own mouth I learnt that it was his intention to do so, & to establish a Town in the fork of the two rivers, where he proposes to fix families in the vicinity on his own Lands. Of the second, I never could obtain any distinct account of the navigation. It has been variously represented; favorably by some,—extremely difficult by others, in its passage thro' the Gauley mountain, (which I presume is the Laurel hill)—but the uncertainty of this matter will now soon be at an end, as there are commissioners appointed by this State to explore the navigation of that river and the communication between it and James river, with a view to a portage. This, equally with the extension of the Potomac navigation, was part of my original plan, and equally urged by me to our Assembly ; for my object was to connect the Western and Eastern or Atlantic States together by strong commercial ties.

I am a friend, therefore on this principle to every channel that can be opened, and wish the people to have choice.—The Kanhawa, and James river, if the obstacles in the former are not great, are certainly the shortest and best for the settlers thereon, for those on the Ohio below, above, perhaps as high as the little Kanhawa and for the Country immediately west of it.

The Monongahela and Yohoghaney with the Potomac are most convenient for all the settlers from the

little Kanhawa, inclusively, to Fort Pitt and upwards, & west as far as the Lakes. Susquehanna and the Alleghany above Fort Pitt some distance, will accommodate a third District of Country; and may for ought I know be equally convenient to the trade of the Lakes. All of them therefore have my best wishes; for as I have observed already, my object & my aim are political. If we cannot bind those people to us by interest, and it is no otherwise to be effected but by a commercial knot, we shall be no more to them after a while, than G. Britain or Spain, and they may be as closely linked with one or other of those powers, as we wish them to be with us, and in that event, they may be a severe thorn in our side.

With respect to the nature of the soil on the Kanhawa, the bottoms are fine, but the lands adjoining are broken.—In some places the hills are very rich, in others piney and very poor: but the principal reason as I conceive, why the settlement has not progressed more, is that the greater part if not all the good Lands, on the main river, are in the hands of persons who do not incline to reside thereon themselves, and possibly hold them too high for others, as there is a surrounding country open to them; this I take to be my own case and might be an inducement to concur in any well concerted measures to further a settlement, which might ultimately, not at too great a distance, subserve my interest in that quarter.

The Great Kanhawa is a long river with very little interruption for a considerable distance—No very large waters empty into it, I believe; Elk river, Coal

river and a creek called Pokitellico below the falls, and Green river above them, are the most considerable. I am glad to hear that the Susquehanna canal is so well advanced. I thank you for the offer of Mr. Nielson's services in the western country, and am, with very great, &c.

TO COLS. FITZGERALD AND GILPIN.

MOUNT VERNON, 31st March, 1786.

Gentn.,

Yesterday Mr. Brindley, in company with a Mr. Harris, Manager for the James river Company (the latter having been sent for the former, by the Directors thereof,) left this on their way to Richmond from whence Mr. Brindley expects to be returned, as far as Alexandria, in seven days from the date hereof. I have engaged him to call upon Colo. Gilpin on his rout back.

Mr. Brindley[1] and Mr. Harris took the great Falls in their way down and both approve of the present line for our Canal—the first very much. He conceives that 9-10ths of the expence of the one fifth proposed will be saved by this cut, the work altogether as secure, and the entrance into the river by no means unfavorable. He thinks however that a good deal of attention and judgment is required in fixing Locks there ; the height of which he observes is always governed by the ground—they frequently run from four to eighteen feet, and some times are as high as twenty four.

[1] A nephew of the engineer who conducted the work of the Duke of Bridgewater. He was engaged by the Susquehanna Company.

The nature and declination of the ground, according to him, is alone to direct—and where this will admit he thinks the larger the Locks are made the better, because more convenient.

With respect to this part of the business I feel, and always have confessed an entire incompetency:—nor do I conceive that theoretical knowledge alone is adequate to the undertaking. Locks, upon the most judicious plan, will certainly be expensive; and if not properly constructed and judiciously placed, may be altogether useless. It is for these reasons therefore that I have frequently suggested (though no decision has been had) the propriety of employing a professional man.

Nevertheless whether the expense of obtaining one in, and bringing him from Europe has been thought unnecessary, or too burthensome for the advantages, which are to be expected, I know not: but as it is said no person in this country has *more* practical knowledge than Mr. Brindley, I submit to your consideration the propriety of engaging him to take the Falls in his way back; to examine, level and digest a plan for Locks at that place; if it shall appear good, and his reasons in support of the spots and sizes conclusive it will justify the adoption; if palpably erroneous, there is no obligation upon us to follow him, and the expence in that case is the only evil which can result from it—this for the chance of a probable good, I am not only willing but desirous of encountering; and if Colo. Gilpin has not already made the trip to that place which he proposed at our last visit, and disappointment there, it

would give me great pleasure if it could be so timed as to accompany Mr. Brindley; this would not only give countenance to the measure, but aid also, and might serve to remove the little jealousies which otherwise arise in the minds of our own managers. Taking Mr. Brindley to the works *now* may ultimately save expence—at the same time having a plan before us, enable us at all convenient times to provide materials for its execution. I am, &c.

P. S. If my proposition is acceded to, it would be better to fix at once what Mr. Brindley is to receive, and I will readily subscribe my name to what you two gentlemen shall agree to give him.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

MOUNT VERNON, 12 April, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I give you the trouble of this letter at the instance of Mr. Dalby of Alexandria, who is called to Philadelphia to attend what he conceives to be a vexatious lawsuit respecting a slave of his, which a society of Quakers in the city, (formed for such purposes,) have attempted to liberate. The merits of this case will no doubt appear upon trial. From Mr. Dalby's state of the matter, it should seem, that this society is not only acting repugnant to justice, so far as its conduct concerns strangers, but in my opinion extremely impoliticly with respect to the State, the city in particular, and without being able, (but by acts of tyranny and oppression,) to accomplish its own ends. He says the con-

duct of this society is not sanctioned by law. Had the case been otherwise, whatever my opinion of the law might have been, my respect for the policy of the State would on this occasion have appeared in my silence; because against the penalties of promulgated laws one may guard, but there is no avoiding the snares of individuals, or of private societies. And if the practice of this society, of which Mr. Dalby speaks, is not discountenanced, none of those, whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants, will visit the city if they can possibly avoid it; because by so doing they hazard their property, or they must be at the expense (and this will not always succeed) of providing servants of another description for the trip.

I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting. But when slaves, who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when masters are taken unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other; and when it happens to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the society, and he loses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in such a

case, and not humanity in any, because it introduces more evils than it can cure.

I will make no apology for writing to you on this subject, for, if Mr. Dalby has not misconceived the matter, an evil exists which requires a remedy; if he has, my intentions have been good, though I may have been too precipitate in this address. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good and kind wish for Mrs. Morris and your family, and I am, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 May, 1786.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

* * * * * *

The letter which you did me the favor to write to me by Mr. Barrett dated the 6th of February together with the parcel and packages which accompanied it came safely to hand, and for which I pray you to accept my grateful acknowledgments.

The account of and observations which you have made on the policy and practice of Great Britain at the other courts of Europe, respecting these States, I was but too well informed and convinced of before. Unhappily for us, though their accounts are greatly exaggerated, yet our conduct has laid the foundation for them. It is one of the evils of democratical governments, that the people, not always seeing and frequently misled, must often feel before they can act right; but then evils of this nature seldom fail to work their own cure. It is to be lamented, neverthe-

less, that the remedies are so slow, and that those, who may wish to apply them seasonably, are not attended to before they suffer in person, in interest, and in reputation. I am not without hopes, that matters will take a more favorable turn in the federal constitution. The discerning part of the community have long since seen the necessity of giving adequate powers to Congress for national purposes, and the ignorant and designing must yield to it ere long. Several late acts of the different legislatures have a tendency thereto. Among these the impost, which is now acceded to by every State in the Union, (though clogged a little by that of New York,) will enable Congress to support the national credit in pecuniary matters better than it has been ; whilst a measure, in which this State has taken the lead at its last session, will, it is to be hoped, give efficient powers to that body for all commercial purposes. This is a nomination of some of its first characters to meet other commissioners from the several States, in order to consider of and decide upon such powers, as shall be necessary for the sovereign power of them to act under ; which are to be reported to the respective legislatures at their autumnal sessions, for, it is to be hoped, final adoption ; thereby avoiding those tedious and futile deliberations, which result from recommendations and partial concurrences, at the same time that it places it at once in the power of Congress to meet European nations upon decisive and equal ground. All the legislatures, which I have heard from, have come into the proposition, and have made very judicious appoint-

ments.[1] Much good is expected from this measure, and it is regretted by many, that more objects were not embraced by the meeting. A general convention is talked of by many for the purpose of revising and correcting the defects of the federal government; but whilst this is the wish of some, it is the dread of others, from an opinion that matters are not yet sufficiently ripe for such an event.[2]

The British still occupy our posts to the westward, and will, I am persuaded, continue to do so under one

[1] This convention met at Annapolis in September, 1786. Five States only were represented, and when the members came together, they found themselves invested with such limited powers, as not to enable them to act for the general purposes of the meeting. They did little else than to draw up a report, to be presented to the several States, urging the necessity of a revision of the confederated system of government and recommending a convention of delegates with larger powers to be held at Philadelphia on the 2d of May following.

[2] "My sentiments with respect to the federal government are well known. Publicly and privately have they been communicated without reserve; but my opinion is, that there is more wickedness than ignorance in the conduct of the States, or, in other words, in the conduct of those who have too much influence in the government of them; and until the curtain is withdrawn, and the private views and selfish principles, upon which these men act, are exposed to public notice, I have little hope of amendment without another convulsion.

"The picture of our affairs as drawn by the committee, approved by Congress, and presented to the public, did not at all surprise me. Before that report, though I could not go into the minutiæ of matters, I was more certain of the aggregate of our [ills], than I am now of the remedy, which will be applied. Without the latter, I do not see upon what ground your agent at the court of Morocco, and the other at Algiers, are to treat, unless, having to do with new hands, they mean to touch the old strings, and make them dance awhile to the tune of promises."—*Washington to Henry Lee*, 5 April, 1786.

The report of Congress is printed in the *Journals of Congress*, February 3d, 7th, and 15th, 1786. "Our federal distresses," said Mr. Lee, "gather fast to a point. New Jersey has refused the requisition, and will not grant a shilling till New York accedes to the impost. Perhaps this intemperance in Jersey may bring this State to acquiesce in a system of finance long ago approved by ten States, and whose operation might have saved the difficulties, which impend over the Union."—New York, March 2d.

pretence or another, no matter how shallow, as long as they can. Of this, from some circumstances which had occurred, I have been convinced since August, 1783, and gave it as my opinion at that time, if not officially to Congress as the sovereign, at least to a number of its members, that they might act accordingly. It is indeed evident to me, that they had it in contemplation to do this at the time of the treaty. The expression of the article, which respects the evacuation of them, as well as the tenor of their conduct since relative to this business, is strongly marked with deception. I have not the smallest doubt, but that every secret engine is continually at work to inflame the Indian mind, with a view to keep it at variance with these States, for the purpose of retarding our settlements to the westward, and depriving us of the fur and peltry trade of that country.

Your assurances, my dear Marquis, respecting the male and female asses, are highly pleasing to me, I shall look for them with much expectation and great satisfaction, as a valuable acquisition and important service.

The Jack which I have already received from Spain, in appearance is fine ; but his late royal master, tho' past his grand climacteric, cannot be less moved by female allurements than he is ; or when prompted can proceed with more deliberation and majestic solemnity to the work of procreation.—The other Jack perished at sea.

The benevolence of your heart, my dear Marquis, is so conspicuous upon all occasions, that I never

wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country. But I despair of seeing it. Some petitions were presented to the Assembly, at its last session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set them afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected; and that too by legislative authority.

I give you the trouble of a letter to the Marquis de St. Simon, in which I have requested to be presented to M. de Menonville. The favorable terms in which you speak of Mr. Jefferson gives me great pleasure. He is a man of whom I early imbibed the highest opinion. I am as much pleased, therefore, to meet confirmations of my discernment in these matters, as I am mortified when I find myself mistaken. * * *

TO JOHN JAY.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 May, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

In due course of post, I have been honored with your favors of the 2d and 16th of March[1]; since which I have been a good deal engaged and pretty much from home. For the enclosure, which accom-

[1] See *Life of John Jay*, vol. i., p. 242.

panied the first, I thank you. Mr. Littlepage seems to have forgot what had been his situation, forgot what was due to you, and indeed what was necessary to his own character; and his guardian, I think, seems to have forgotten every thing.[1]

I coincide perfectly in sentiment with you, my dear Sir, that there are errors in our national government, which call for correction; loudly, I would add; but I shall find myself happily mistaken if the remedies are at hand. We are certainly in a delicate situation; but my fear is, that the people are not yet sufficiently *misled* to retract from error. To be plainer, I think there is more wickedness than ignorance mixed in our councils. Under this impression I scarcely know what opinion to entertain of a general convention. That it is necessary to revise and amend the articles of confederation, I entertain no doubt; but what may be the consequences of such an attempt is doubtful. Yet something must be done, or the fabric must fall, for it certainly is tottering.

Ignorance and design are difficult to combat. Out of these proceed illiberal sentiments, improper jealousies, and a train of evils which oftentimes in republican governments must be sorely felt before they can be removed. The former, that is ignorance, being a fit soil for the latter to work in, tools are employed by them which a generous mind would disdain to use; and which nothing but time, and their own puerile or wicked productions, can show the inefficacy and dan-

[1] This subject appears to have been made a matter of much more public importance than its merits deserved. It is fully explained in the *Life of John Jay*, vol. i., pp. 204–229.

gerous tendency of. I think often of our situation, and view it with concern. From the high ground we stood upon, from the plain path which invited our footsteps, to be so fallen! so lost! it is really mortifying. But virtue, I fear, has in a great degree taken its departure from our land, and the want of a disposition to do justice is the source of the national embarrassments; for, whatever guise or colorings are given to them, this I apprehend is the origin of the evils we now feel, and probably shall labor under for some time yet. With respectful compliments to Mrs. Jay, and sentiments of sincere friendship, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO HENRY L. CHARTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 20th May, 1786.

SIR,

The letter which you did me the favor to write to me from Philadelphia on the 5th inst. came safely to hand, and I should have given it an earlier acknowledgment had not frequent calls from home, & unavoidable business prevented it.

I do not perceive, upon recurring to the subject, that I can be more explicit in the description of my Lands on the Big Kanhawa, & on the Ohio between the two Kanhawas, than I was when I had the pleasure of seeing you at this place.—If I recollect rightly I then informed you, that from the accounts given me of them by the Surveyor; from what I had seen of them myself, (especially the tract on the big Kanhawa) from every other source of information, & from

my best knowledge & belief, there can be no finer land in that or any other country; or lands more abounding in natural advantages.

The whole of them are washed by the rivers I have mentioned—are furnished with land streams fit for water works of various kinds—stored with meadow ground wch. may be reclaimed in the cheapest & most expeditious manner imaginable, (by only cutting away trifling banks of earth, which have been formed by the Beaver) and abound in fish & wild fowl of all kinds, as well as every other sort of game with which the country is filled. With respect to the quality of the soil, it may be conceived that none can exceed it when I relate a single fact, namely, that it was the first choice of the whole country thereabouts, after a thorough research of it by an excellent judge, the late Colo. Crawford.

As to the situation of them, none can be more advantageous; for living about midway between the upper & lower settlements on the Ohio, the trade must pass within sight of those Lands, whilst the occupants of them, equally convenient to both might embrace the inland navigation of either Potomac or James river, as soon as they are made to communicate with the Western waters; which no doubt will soon be effected. I think too, I should not be mistaken were I to add that ere long a town of some importance will be established in the vicinity of them—viz—at the confluence of the big Kanhawa & Ohio; which is the point at which the trade to Richmond, & that which is carried to the northern parts of this State, &

to Maryland & Pennsylvania, must separate. But to go into a more minute detail in writing of what has before been the subject of oral conversation, would be more tiresome than interesting; especially as it is by no means my wish that any purchase, whatever—should rely upon my accot. of this matter, or on those of any others—but judge for himself or themselves, in all things.

When you asked me if I was disposed to sell these Lands, I answered and truly that I had never had it in contemplation, because I well knew they would rise more in value than the purchase money at the present time would accumulate by interest; consequently under these circumstances it would be difficult in the present moment to fix on a price which would be acceded to, that would be an equivalent for them hereafter. However as I had no family, wished to live easy & to spend the remainder of my days with as little trouble as possible, I said I would part with them if a good price could be obtained; and that my sense of their value might easily be ascertained by the terms on which I had proposed to rent them (& which I think you told me you had seen). One of which, amounting in fact to an absolute sale, being on a Lease of 999 years, renewable, was at ten pounds this currency per hundred acres, which at 5 p. ct.—(the legal interest in this State), would have come to 40s. like money pr. acre for the land on purchase; but I added, that if any one person, or sett of men would take the whole, I would make the terms of payment easy and abate considerably in the price. I

therefore now inform you that the lands (the patents & plats of which I shewed you) the titles to which are uncontrollable—free from those clashing interests and jarring disputes with which much of the property in that country is replete, are in quantities & situation as follows—

1st.—2314, on the Ohio river three or four miles below the mouth of the little Kanhawa.

2d.—2448 acres on the said river abt. sixteen miles below the former.

3d.—4395 acres on Ditto, just above the great bend in it & below the other two.

4th.—10,990—on the big Kanhawa (west side) beginning within two or three miles of its conflux with the Ohio & extending up the former 17 miles.

5th.—7,276 acres a little above this on the East side of the same river Kanhawa.

6th.—2000 acres higher up the Kanhawa (west side) in the fork between Coal river and it.

7th.—2950 acres, opposite thereto, on the East side. In all 32,373 acres on both rivers.

For these lands I would take Thirty thousand English guineas (of the proper weight) or other specie current in the country, at its equivalent value.—Two thousand five hundred of which to be paid at the execution of the Deeds & the remainder in seven years therefrom with an interest of five pr. ct. pr. ann. regularly paid at my seat 'till the principal shall be discharged.

I am not inclined to part with any of these Lands, as an inducement to settle the rest. My mind is so

well satisfied of the superior value of them to most others, that there remains no doubt on it of my obtaining my own terms as the country populates and the situation & local advantages of them unfold. These terms have already been promulgated, but I have not a copy of them by me, or I could send it to you. They were inserted in Dunlaps & Claypoole's Gazette about two years ago, at whose Office it is probable a copy might be had.[1]—One of the conditions was, if my memory serves me, an exemption from the payment of rent three years whilst the tenements were opening & improvements making; this I am still inclined to fulfill.

The rents were different according to the term for which leases were to be granted.

If for twenty one years only, they were to commence & end at £5 pr. hundred; for in that case the stipulated improvements being made, I knew that almost any rent might be had for the Tenement thereafter.

If on leases renewable every ten years forever, the rents were in that case to advance in a certain ratio, to keep pace with the encreasing value of the Land. And if given in the first instance for 999 yrs. as has been mentioned before, then the rent was to commence at ten pounds pr. hund. Acres; which being in fact an alienation of the property, shewed my ideas of its present value & purchase money, as mentioned already. These, as far as I can recite from memory, were the terms on which I offered to rent, and from which I feel no disposition to relax unless as in the

[1] This advertisement is reprinted in the *Magazine of American History*, 1878, p. 623.

case of a purchase, some one or more persons would take the whole off my hands at once, & become responsible for the rent; in which case being influenced by similar principles I might abate accordingly.

I should have great pleasure in giving such letters as you have asked, to the Marquis de la Fayette and Chevr. de la Luzerne, but conceive they could only have an embarrassing operation. It is certainly as consistent with the policy of one country to discourage depopulation, as it is for another to encourage emigration. Considering the matter in this point of view I cannot suppose, however well disposed either of the above gentlemen may be to serve this country, that they would do it at the expence of, & perhaps hazard of censure from their own.

One of these gentlemen too being in the diplomatic or ministerial line would, undoubtedly, be very cautious in expressing a sentiment favorable to a business of this kind.—my best wishes however will follow you thro' all the stages of it; and with esteem, I am, &c.

P. S. I shou'd be glad to know whether this letter found you in Philadelphia.

TO JAMES TILGHMAN.

DEAR SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 5 June, 1786.

I have just had the honor to receive your favor of the 26th ulto.—

Of all the numerous acquaintances of your lately deceased son,[1] & amidst all the sorrowings that are mingled on that melancholy occasion, I may venture

[1] Tench Tilghman died, 18 April, 1786.

to assert (that excepting those of his nearest relatives) none could have felt his death with more regret than I did, because, no one entertained a higher opinion of his worth, or had imbibed sentiments of greater friendship for him than I had done. That you, Sir, should have felt the keenest anguish for this loss, I can readily conceive,—the ties of the parental affection united with those of friendship could not fail to have produced this effect. It is however a dispensation, the wisdom of which is inscrutable, and amidst all your grief, there is this consolation to be drawn ;—that while living, no man could be more esteemed, and since dead, none more lamented than Colo. Tilghman.

As his correspondence with the comtee. of New York is not connected with any transactions of mine, so, consequently, it is not necessary that the Papers to which you allude should compose part of my public documents ; but if they stand single, as they exhibit a trait of his public character, and like all the rest of his transactions will, I am persuaded, do honor to his understanding and probity, it may be desirable in this point of view, to keep them alive by mixing them with mine ; which, undoubtedly, will claim the attention of the Historian ;—who, if I mistake not, will, upon an inspection of them, discover the illiberal ground on which the charge mentioned in the extract of the letter you did me the honor to inclose me is founded.—That a calumny of this kind had been reported, I knew ;—I had laid my acct. for the calumnies of annonymous scribblers ; but I never before had conceived

that such an one as is related, could have originated with, or have met the countenance of Capt. Asgill; whose situation often filled me with the keenest anguish.

I felt for him on many accts.; and not the least, when, viewing him as a man of honor & sentiment, how unfortunate it was for him that a wretch who possessed neither should be the means of causing in him a single pang or a disagreeable sensation. My favorable opinion of him, however is forfeited, if being acquainted with these reports, he did not immediately contradict them.—That I could not have given countenance to the insults which *he says* were offered to his person, especially the grovelling one of erecting a Gibbet before his prison window, will I expect, readily be believed, when I explicitly declare that I never heard of a single attempt to offer an insult, and that I had every reason to be convinced, that, he was treated by the officers around him, with all the tenderness and every civility in their power.—I would fain ask Captn. Asgill how he could reconcile such belief (if his mind had been seriously impressed with it) to the continual indulgencies and procrastinations he had experienced? He will not I presume deny that, he was admitted to his parole within ten or twelve miles of the British lines:—if not to a formal parole, to a confidence yet more unlimited—by being permitted, for the benefit of his health and recreation of his mind, to ride, not merely about the cantonment, but into the surrounding country for many miles with his friend and companion Maj. Gordon, constantly attending him. Would not these indulgencies have pointed

a military character to the portrait from whence they flowed? Did he conceive that discipline was so lax in the American army as that *any* officer *in it* would have granted these liberties to a Person confined by the express order of the Commander in Chief, unless authorized to do so by the same authority? and to ascribe them to the interference of Count de Rochambeau, is as void of foundation as his other conjectures; for I do not recollect that a sentence ever passed between that General and me, directly, or indirectly, on the subject. I was not without suspicions after the final liberation and return of Capt. Asgill to New York that his mind had been improperly impressed or that he was defective in politeness. The treatment he had met with, in my conception, merited an acknowledgment—None, however was offered, and I never sought for the cause.

This concise acct. of the treatment of Capt. Asgill is given from a hasty recollection of the circumstances.—If I had had time, and it was essential, by unpacking my papers and recurring to authentic files, I might have been more pointed and full. It is in my power at any time to convince the unbiased mind that my conduct through the whole of the transaction was neither influenced by passion, guided by inhumanity or under the control of any interference whatsoever. I essayed everything to save the innocent and bring the guilty to punishment, with what success the impartial world must and hereafter certainly will decide.

With very great esteem, &c.[1]

[1] Col. Humphreys published in the *Columbian Magazine* for January, 1787, many of the papers relating to the Asgill affair.

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 June, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * * * *

The advantages, with which the inland navigation of the Rivers Potomac and James are pregnant, must strike every mind that reasons upon the subject; but there is, I perceive, a diversity of sentiment respecting the benefits and the consequences, which may flow from the free and immediate use of the Mississippi. My opinion of this matter has been uniformly the same; and no light in which I have been able to consider the subject is likely to change it. It is, neither to relinquish nor to push our claim to this navigation, but in the mean while to open *all* the communications, which nature has afforded, between the Atlantic States and the western territory, and to encourage the use of them to the utmost. In my judgment it is a matter of very serious concern to the well-being of the former to make it the interest of the latter to trade with them; without which, the ties of consanguinity, which are weakening every day, will soon be no bond, and we shall be no more a few years hence to the inhabitants of that country, than the British and Spaniards are at this day; not so much, indeed, because commercial connexions, it is well known, lead to others, and united are difficult to be broken, and these must take place with the Spaniards, if the navigation of the Mississippi is opened.

Clear I am, that it would be for the interest of the western settlers, as low down the Ohio as the Big Kanhawa, and back to the Lakes, to bring their prod-

uce through one of the channels I have named; but the way must be cleared, and made easy and obvious to them, or else the ease with which people glide down stream will give a different bias to their thinking and acting. Whenever the new States become so populous and so extended to the westward, as really to need it, there will be no power which can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi. Why then should we prematurely urge a matter, which is displeasing and may produce disagreeable consequences, if it is our interest to let it sleep? It may require some management to quiet the restless and impetuous spirits of Kentucky, of whose conduct I am more apprehensive in this business, than I am of all the opposition that will be given by the Spaniards.[1] Mrs. Washington & George and his wife join me in compliments and good wishes to your lady. With great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

[1] Mr. Lee's reply to the above showed that the general voice in Congress was not for insisting on the navigation of the Mississippi as a necessary requisite, in a treaty with Spain. "Your reasoning," said he, "is perfectly conformable to the prevalent doctrine on that subject in Congress. We are very solicitous to form a treaty with Spain for commercial purposes. Indeed no nation in Europe can give us conditions so advantageous to our trade as that kingdom. The carrying business they are like ourselves in, and this common source of difficulty in adjusting commercial treaties between other nations, does not apply to America and Spain. But, my dear General, I do not think you go far enough. Rather than defer longer a free and liberal system of trade with Spain, why not agree to the exclusion of the Mississippi? This exclusion will not, cannot, exist longer than the infancy of the western emigrants. Therefore, to those people, what is now done cannot be important. To the Atlantic States it is highly important; for we have no prospect of bringing to a conclusion our negotiations with the court of Madrid, but by yielding the navigation of the Mississippi. Their minister here is under positive instructions on that point. In all other arrangements the Spanish monarch will give to the States testimonies of his regard and friendship. And I verily believe, that, if the above difficulty

TO WILLIAM GRAYSON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 26 July, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

Is it not among the most unaccountable things in nature, that the representation of a great country should generally be so thin as not to be able to execute the functions of government?[1] To what is this

should be removed, we should soon experience the advantages, which would flow from a connexion with Spain."—July 3d.

"If I stopped short of your ideas respecting the navigation of the Mississippi, or of what may be the opinions of Congress on this subject, it was not from want of coincidence of sentiments, but because I was ignorant, at that time, of the rubs, which are in the way of your commercial treaty with Spain, and because I thought some address might be necessary to temporize with, and keep the settlement of Kentucky in a state of quietness. At this moment that settlement is formidable; population is rapidly increasing there. There are many ambitious and turbulent spirits among its inhabitants, who, from the present difficulties in their intercourse with the Atlantic States, have turned their eyes to New Orleans, and may become riotous and ungovernable, if the hope of traffic with it is cut off by treaty. Notwithstanding, if this cession is counterpoised, it may be a more favorable time for Congress to speak decisively to them than when they have got stronger, but not sufficiently matured to force the passage of the Mississippi themselves; whilst the plans, which are in agitation for opening communications with that territory, may, if successful, unfold to them new prospects mutually beneficial to the old and new States. All these matters, no doubt, will be duly considered by Congress, and a decision had on whichever side the advantages preponderate."—*Washington to Henry Lee*, 20 July, 1786.

Even Lafayette had left the country carrying an impression that many people did not desire the navigation of the Mississippi, as it might prove the excess of a very good thing—the opening of water-ways.

It is curious that at this time the Spanish representative, Gardoqui, believed that he had gained the support of Richard Henry Lee to his policy. "Mi respectable amico el ex-Presidente Mr. Ricardo Henry Lee, por que es todo nuestro, y Miembro de Virginia en este Congresso, cuya presencia acrobardara a sus concolegas, y es capaz de dar doble consistencia a nuestras ideas."—*Gardoqui to Florida Blanca*, 12 May, 1786.

[1] Mr. Grayson had written: "Till within a short time the representation has been so thin, as to render it impracticable for Congress to undertake any matter of importance, although there are many which require their serious attention."—May 27th.

to be ascribed? Is it the result of political manœuvre in some States, or is it owing to supineness or want of means? Be the causes what they may, it is shameful and disgusting. In a word, it hurts us. Our character as a nation is dwindling; and what it must come to, if a change should not soon take place, our enemies have foretold; for in truth we seem either not capable, or not willing, to take care of ourselves.

For want, I suppose, of competent knowledge of the Connecticut claim to western territory, the compromise which is made with her appears to me to be a disadvantageous one for the Union, and, if her right is not one of the motives (according to your account) for yielding to it, in my humble opinion, is exceedingly dangerous and bad; for upon such principles *might*, not *right*, must ever prevail, and there will be no surety for any thing.[1]

[1] Alluding to the tract of country usually called the Connecticut Reserve, making a part of the State of Ohio, and situate on the south side of Lake Erie. Speaking of the measure, as acceded to by Congress, Mr. Grayson said: "The consequence I apprehend is a clear loss of about six millions of acres to the United States, which had already been ceded by Virginia and New York; for the Assembly of Connecticut now sitting will unquestionably open a land-office, and the federal constitution has not given a court in this instance. The advocates for this measure urged in favor of its adoption, that the claim of a powerful State, although unsupported by right, was, under present circumstances, a disagreeable thing; that sacrifices must be made for the public tranquillity, as well as to acquire an indisputable title to the residue; that Connecticut would settle it immediately with emigrants well-disposed to the Union, who would form a barrier, not only against the British, but the Indian tribes; and that the thick settlement they would immediately form would enhance the value of the adjacent country and facilitate emigrations thereto."—Upon these grounds the cession on the part of Connecticut was accepted by Congress, the *reservation* above mentioned being conceded at the same time. All the delegates, except those from Virginia and Maryland, voted in favor of the proposition.—*Journals*, May 26th.

I wish very sincerely, that the land ordinance may answer the expectations of Congress. I had, and still have, my doubts of the utility of the plan, but pray devoutly, that they may never be realized, as I am desirous of seeing it a productive branch of the revenue. That part, which makes the waters and carrying-places common highways, and free for all the States, is certainly valuable.

I thank you for the other articles of information. Such as you have disclosed confidentially, you may rest assured will proceed no further, till it becomes public through other channels; and this shall always be the case with paragraphs, which are so marked. The answer to the memorial of Mr. Adams by Lord Carmarthen I have seen at large. It was impolitic and unfortunate if it was not unjust in these States to pass laws, which by fair construction might be considered as infractions of the treaty of peace. It is good policy at all times to place one's adversary in the wrong. Had we observed good faith, and the western posts had then been withheld from us by Great Britain, we might have appealed to God and man for justice; and, if there are any guarantees to the treaty, we might have called upon them to see it fulfilled.[1] But now we cannot do this; though clear I am, that the reasons assigned by the British ministry

[1] By the seventh article of the treaty of peace, the posts held by the British within the United States were to be evacuated. By the fourth article, every facility was to be allowed to British subjects to collect the debts due to them in the several States. Lord Carmarthen had shown, by quoting the recent laws of some of the States, that obstacles had been thrown in the way of collecting such debts, and that the fourth article of the treaty was thus violated, which was the reason why the posts were not given up.

are only ostensible, and that the posts, under one pretence or another, were intended to have been detained, though no such acts had ever passed. But how different would our situation have been under such circumstances. With very sincere regard and affection, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO WAKELIN WELCH, ESQ.

MOUNT VERNON, — July, 1786.

SIR,

Since my last of the 28th of Novr., I have been favored with your letters of the 27th of Feby. & 13th of March; and have receiv'd the paper hangings and watch by Capt. Andrews. With the last Mrs. Washington is well pleased, and I thank you in her name for your attention to the making of it.

If the stocks keep up, and there is not a moral certainty of their rising higher in a short time, it is my wish and desire that my interest in the Bank may be immediately sold, and the money arising therefrom made subject to my Drafts in your hands, some of which at 60 days sight may soon follow this letter.

The footing on which you have placed the interest of my debt to you, is all I require. To stand on equal ground with others who owe money to the merchants in England, and who were not so prompt in their payment of the principal as I have been, is all I aim at. Whatever the two Countries may finally decide with respect to interest; or whatever general agreement or compromise may be come to, between British Cred-

itors and American Debtors, I am willing to abide by; nor should I again have touched upon this subject in this letter, had you not introduced a case which, in my opinion has no similitude with the point in question.

You say I have received interest at the Bank, for the money which was there—granted—but (besides remarking that only part of this money was mine) permit me to ask if G. Britain was not enabled by means of the bank, to continue the War with this country? whether this war did not deprive us of the means of paying our Debts? and whether the interest I received from this source did or could bear any proportion to the losses I sustained by having my grain, my Tobacco and every article of produce, rendered unsaleable and left to perish on my hands?

However, I again repeat that I ask no discrimination of you in my favor, for had there been no stipulation by treaty to secure debts—nay more, had there even been an exemption by the legislative authority or practice of this Country against it, I would, from a conviction of the propriety and justice of the measure, have discharged my *original* debt to you.

But from the moment our ports were shut, and our markets were stopped by the hostile fleets and armies of Great Britain, 'till the first were opened, and the others revived, I should, for the reasons I have (tho' very cursorily) assigned, have thought the interest during that epocha, stood upon a very different footing.

I am much obliged by the trouble you have taken to enquire into the nature of the connexion between

the House of Messrs. Hanbury & Co., and Balfour & Barrand. I had no sanguine hopes of redress from that quarter, but as it seemed to be the *only* chance I was willing to try it. I am, &c.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 August, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

The letter you did me the honor to write to me on the 3d of February has come safely to hand. Nothing could be more satisfactory to me than the friendly sentiments contained in it, and the generous manner in which you always interest yourself in the happiness and dignity of the United States. I wish I had it in my power to inform you that the several States had fully complied with all the wise requisitions, which Congress has made to them on national subjects. But, unfortunately for us, this is not yet the case, although for my own part I do not cease to expect, that this just policy will ultimately take effect. It is not the part of a good citizen to despair of the republic; nor ought we to have calculated, that our young governments would have acquired in so short a period all the consistency and solidity, which it has been the work of ages to give to other nations. All the States, however, have at length granted the impost; though unhappily some of them have granted it under such qualifications as have hitherto prevented its operation. The greater part of the Union seems to be convinced of the necessity of federal measures, and of investing

Congress with the power of regulating the commerce of the whole. The reasons you offer on this subject are certainly forcible, and I cannot but hope will ere long have their due efficacy.[1]

In other respects our internal governments are daily acquiring strength. The laws have their fullest energy; justice is well administered; robbery, violence, or murder is not heard of, from New Hampshire to Georgia. The people at large, (as far as I can learn,) are more industrious than they were before the war. Economy begins, partly from necessity and partly from choice and habit, to prevail. The seeds of population are scattered over an immense tract of western country. In the old States, which were the theatres of hostility, it is wonderful to see how soon the ravages of war are repaired. Houses are rebuilt, fields enclosed, stocks of cattle, which were destroyed, are replaced, and many a desolated territory assumes again the cheerful appearance of cultivation. In many places the vestiges of conflagration and ruin are hardly to be traced. The arts of peace, such as clearing rivers, building bridges, and establishing conveniences for travelling, are assiduously promoted.

[1] "I thank your Excellency for the details, which you have so kindly given me respecting American affairs. The sentiments at Versailles are similar to your own, in regard to the powers that the States ought to grant to Congress for the purpose of a general regulation of commerce. So wise and prudent a measure cannot surely result in any detriment to liberty; and the Americans have too much intelligence and good sense not to perceive that foreign powers, who desire commercial alliances with them, cannot treat with thirteen distinct States, which, having different interests among themselves, can only act in a united capacity through Congress in adopting such general measures, as will redound to the advantage of the republic. I hope the next news, which we shall receive from America, will inform us, that the several legislatures have put the last hand to this important affair."—*Luzerne to Washington*, 3d February, 1786.

In short, the foundation of a great empire is laid, and I please myself with a persuasion, that Providence will not leave its work imperfect.

I am sensible, that the picture of our situation, which has been exhibited in Europe since the peace, has been of a very different complexion ; but it must be remembered, that all the unfavorable features have been much heightened by the medium of the English newspapers, through which they have been represented. The British still continue to hold the posts on our frontiers, and affect to charge us with some infractions of the treaty. On the other hand we retort the accusation. What will be the consequences is more than I can predict. To me, however, it appears, that they are playing the same foolish game in commerce that they have lately done in war; that their ill-judged impositions will eventually drive our ships from their ports, wean our attachments from their manufactures, and give to France decided advantages for a commercial connexion with us. To strengthen the alliance, and promote the interests of France and America, will ever be the favorite object of him, who has the honor to subscribe himself, with every sentiment of attachment, dear Sir, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 August, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

The letters you did me the favor to write to me, on the 4th and 7th of January, have been duly received. In answer to your obliging inquiries respect-

ing the dress, attitude, &c., which I would wish to have given to the statue in question, I have only to observe, that, not having sufficient knowledge in the art of sculpture to oppose my judgment to the taste of connoisseurs, I do not desire to dictate in the matter. On the contrary, I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever may be judged decent and proper. I should even scarcely have ventured to suggest, that perhaps a servile adherence to the garb of antiquity might not be altogether so expedient, as some little deviation in favor of the modern costume, if I had not learnt from Colonel Humphreys, that this was a circumstance hinted in conversation by Mr. West to Mr. Houdon. This taste, which has been introduced in painting by West, I understand is received with applause, and prevails extensively. * * *

We have no news of importance; and, if we had, I should hardly be in the way of learning it, as I divide my time between the superintendence of opening the navigation of our rivers, and attention to my private concerns. Indeed I am too much secluded from the world to know with certainty what sensation the refusal of the British to deliver up the western posts has made on the public mind. I fear the edge of its sensibility is somewhat blunted. Federal measures are not yet universally adopted. New York, which was as well disposed a State as any in the Union, is said to have become in a degree anti-federal. Some other States are in my opinion falling into very foolish and wicked plans of emitting paper money. I cannot however give up my hopes and expectations,

that we shall ere long adopt a more just and liberal system of policy. What circumstances will lead, or what misfortunes will compel us to it, is more than can be told without the spirit of prophecy. In the mean time the people are industrious. Economy begins to prevail, and our internal governments are in general tolerably well administered.

You will probably have heard of the death of General Greene before this reaches you; in which case you will, in common with your countrymen, have regretted the loss of so great and so honest a man.[1] General McDougall, who was a brave soldier and a disinterested patriot, is also dead.[2] He belonged to the legislature of his State. The last act of his life was (after being carried on purpose to the Senate) to give his voice against the emission of a paper cur-

[1] Greene died near Savannah, 19 June, 1786, aged forty-four.

"Persuaded as I always have been of Genl. Greene's integrity and worth, I spurned those reports which tended to calumniate his conduct in the connection with Banks; being perfectly convinced that whenever the matter should be investigated, his motives for entering into it would appear pure and unimpeachable.—I was not without my fears though that he might suffer in a pecuniary way by his engagement with this man.—I would fain hope however that the case may, ultimately, be otherwise; and that upon a final settlement of his affairs there will be a handsome competency for Mrs. Greene and the children, —But should the case be otherwise, and Mrs. Greene, yourself, and Mr. Rutledge would think proper to entrust my namesake G. Washington Greene to my care, I will give him as good an education as this country (I mean the United States) will afford, and will bring him up to either of the genteel professions that his frds. may chuse, or his own inclination shall lead him to pursue, at my own cost & expence.

"I condole very sincerely with Mrs. Greene (to whom please to tender my respects) and the rest of General Greene's friends at the loss the public, as well as his family, has sustained by the death of this valuable character—especially at this crisis—when the political machine seems pregnant with the most awful events."—*Washington to Jeremiah Wadsworth*, 22 October, 1786.

[2] Died 8 June, 1786.

rency. Colonel Tilghman, who was formerly of my family, died lately, and left as fair a reputation as ever belonged to a human character. Thus some of the pillars of the revolution fall. Others are mouldering by insensible degrees. May our country never want props to support the glorious fabric. With sentiments of esteem and regard, I have the honor to be, &c.

TO JOHN JAY.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 August, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I have to thank you very sincerely for your interesting letter of the 27th of June, as well as for the other communications you had the goodness to make at the same time. I am sorry to be assured, of what indeed I had little doubt before, that we have been guilty of violating the treaty in some instances. What a misfortune it is, the British should have so well grounded a pretext for their palpable infractions! And what a disgraceful part, out of the choice of difficulties before us, are we to act!

Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own. What the event will be, is also beyond the reach of my foresight. We have errors to correct. We have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation. Experience has taught us, that men will not adopt and carry into execution measures the best calculated for their own good, without the intervention of a coercive power. I do not conceive we can

exist long as a nation without having lodged some where a power, which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State governments extends over the several States.

To be fearful of investing Congress, constituted as that body is, with ample authorities for national purposes, appears to me the very climax of popular absurdity and madness. Could Congress exert them for the detriment of the public, without injuring themselves in an equal or greater proportion? Are not their interests inseparably connected with those of their constituents? By the rotation of appointment, must they not mingle frequently with the mass of citizens? Is it not rather to be apprehended, if they were possessed of the powers before described, that the individual members would be induced to use them, on many occasions, very timidly and inefficaciously for fear of losing their popularity and future election? We must take human nature as we find it. Perfection falls not to the share of mortals. Many are of opinion, that Congress have too frequently made use of the suppliant, humble tone of requisition in applications to the States, when they had a right to assert their imperial dignity and command obedience. Be that as it may, requisitions are a perfect nullity where thirteen sovereign, independent, disunited States are in the habit of discussing and refusing compliance with them at their option. Requisitions are actually little better than a jest and a by-word throughout the land. If you tell the legislatures they have violated the treaty of peace, and invaded the prerogatives of

the confederacy, they will laugh in your face. What then is to be done? Things cannot go on in the same train for ever. It is much to be feared, as you observe, that the better kind of people, being digusted with the circumstances, will have their minds prepared for any revolution whatever. We are apt to run from one extreme into another. To anticipate and prevent disastrous contingencies would be the part of wisdom and patriotism.

What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing. I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! What a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! What a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find, that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious! Would to God, that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.

Retired as I am from the world, I frankly acknowledge I cannot feel myself an unconcerned spectator. Yet, having happily assisted in bringing the ship into port, and having been fairly discharged, it is not my business to embark again on a sea of troubles. Nor could it be expected, that my sentiments and opinions would have much weight on the minds of my countrymen. They have been neglected, though given as a last legacy in the most solemn manner. I had then

perhaps some claims to public attention. I consider myself as having none at present. Mrs Washington joins me in compliments, etc.

With sentiments of sincere esteem and friendship, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MOUNT VERNON, 15 August, 1786.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

I will not conceal, that my numerous correspondencies are daily becoming irksome to me. Yet I always receive your letters with augmenting satisfaction, and therefore rejoice with you in the measures, which are likely to be productive of a more frequent intercourse between our two nations. Thus motives of a private as well as of a public nature conspire to give me pleasure, in finding that the active policy of France is preparing to take advantage of the supine stupidity of England with respect to our commerce.

While the latter by its impolitic duties and restrictions is driving our ships incessantly from its harbors, the former seems, by the invitations it is giving, to stretch forth the friendly hand to invite them into its ports. I am happy in a conviction, that there may be established between France and the United States such a mutual intercourse of good offices and reciprocal interests, as cannot fail to be attended with the happiest consequences. Nations are not influenced, as individuals may be, by disinterested friendships; but, when it is their interest to live in amity, we have little reason to apprehend any rupture. This princi-

ple of union can hardly exist in a more distinguished manner between two nations, than it does between France and the United States. There are many articles of manufacture, which we stand absolutely in need of, and shall continue to have occasion for, so long as we remain an agricultural people, which will be while lands are so cheap and plenty, that is to say, for ages to come.

In the mean time we shall have large quantities of timber, fish, oil, wheat, tobacco, rice, indigo, &c. to dispose of. Money we have not. Now it is obvious, that we must have recourse for the goods and manufactures we may want to the nation, which will enable us to pay for them by receiving our produce in return. Our commerce with any of the great manufacturing kingdoms of Europe will, therefore, be in proportion to the facility of making remittances, which such manufacturing nations may think proper to afford us. On the other hand, France has occasion for many of our productions and raw materials. Let her judge whether it is most expedient to receive them by direct importation, and to pay for them in goods, or to obtain them through the circuitous channel of Britain, and to pay for them in money as she formerly did.

I know that Britain arrogantly expects we will sell our produce wherever we can find a market, and bring the money to purchase goods from her. I know that she vainly hopes to retain what share she pleases in our trade, in consequence of our prejudices in favor of her fashions and manufactures. But these are illu-

sions, which will vanish and disappoint her, as the dreams of conquest have already done. Experience is constantly teaching us, that these predilections were founded in error. We find the quality and price of the French goods we receive, in many instances, to be better than the quality and price of the English. Time, and a more thorough acquaintance with the business may be necessary to instruct your merchants in the choice and assortment of goods necessary for such a country. As to an ability for giving credit, in which the English merchants boast a superiority, I am confident it would be happy for America if the practice could be entirely abolished.

However unimportant America may be considered at present, and however Britain may affect to despise her trade, there will assuredly come a day, when this country will have some weight in the scale of empires. While connected with us as colonies only, was not Britain the first power in the world? Since the dissolution of that connexion, does not France occupy the same illustrious place? Your successful endeavors, my dear Marquis, to promote the interests of your two countries, (as you justly call them,) must give you the most unadulterated satisfaction. Be assured the measures, which have lately been taken, with regard to the two articles of *oil* and *tobacco*, have tended very much to endear you to your fellow citizens on this side of the Atlantic.

Although I pretend to no peculiar information respecting commercial affairs, nor any foresight into the scenes of futurity, yet, as the member of an infant

empire, as a philanthropist by character, and, (if I may be allowed the expression,) as a citizen of the great republic of humanity at large, I cannot help turning my attention sometimes to this subject. I would be understood to mean, I cannot avoid reflecting with pleasure on the probable influence, that commerce may hereafter have on human manners and society in general. On these occasions I consider how mankind may be connected like one great family in fraternal ties. I indulge a fond, perhaps an enthusiastic idea, that, as the world is evidently much less barbarous than it has been, its melioration must still be progressive; that nations are becoming more humanized in their policy, that the subjects of ambition and causes for hostility are daily diminishing; and, in fine, that the period is not very remote, when the benefits of a liberal and free commerce will pretty generally succeed to the devastations and horrors of war.

Some of the late treaties, which have been entered into, and particularly that between the King of Prussia and the United States, seem to constitute a new era in negotiation, and to promise the happy consequences I have just now been mentioning. But let me ask you, my dear Marquis, in such an enlightened, such a liberal age, how is it possible the great maritime powers of Europe should submit to pay an annual tribute to the little piratical states of Barbary? Would to Heaven we had a navy able to reform those enemies to mankind, or crush them into non-existence. * * *

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, 1 September, 1786.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

Enclosed are all the documents Mr. Lear could find respecting the confinement and treatment under it of Captain Asgill. For want of recurrence to them before I wrote to Mr. Tilghman,[2] I perceive, that a bad memory had run me into an error in my narrative of the latter, in one particular. For it should seem by that, as if the loose and unguarded manner, in which Captain Asgill was held, was sanctioned by me; whereas one of my letters to Colonel Dayton condemns this conduct, and orders Asgill to be closely confined. Mr. Lear has given all the letters at length. Extracts might have answered; but I judged it better that the whole tenor of the correspondence should appear, that no part might seem to be hidden.

I well remember Major Gordon's attending Asgill; and by one of my letters to Dayton it is evident, that Gordon had written to me, but my letter books have registered no reply. In what manner it would be best to bring this matter before the public I am at a loss, and leave it to you to determine under a consideration of the circumstances, which are as fully communicated as the documents in my hands will enable me to do. There is one mystery in the business, which I cannot develop, nor are there any papers in my possession which explain it. Hazen was ordered to send an un-

[1] The commissioners for making treaties in Europe, of which Colonel Humphreys was secretary, having been dissolved, he returned to the United States in May, and since that time he had passed several days at Mount Vernon. He was now in Connecticut.

[2] This letter may be seen under the date of June 5th.

conditional prisoner. Asgill comes. Hazen, or some other, must have given information of a Lieutenant Turner, (under the former description). Turner is ordered on, but never came. Why? I am unable to say; nor is there any letter from Hazen (to be found,) which accounts for a non-compliance with the order. If I had not too many causes to distrust my memory, I should ascribe it to there having been no such officer, or that he was also under capitulation; for Captain Shaach[1] seems to have been held as a proper victim after this.

I will write as soon as I am able to Mr. Tilghman, requesting him to withhold my first accounts of Asgill's treatment from his correspondent in England, promising an authentic one from original papers. It may, however, have passed him. In that case, it will be necessary for me to say something to reconcile my own accounts.

I write to you with a very aching head and disordered frame, and Mr. Lear will copy the letter. Saturday last, by an imprudent act, I brought on an ague and fever on Sunday, which returned with violence Tuesday and Thursday; and, if Dr. Craik's efforts are ineffectual, I shall have them again this day. The family join me in every good wish for you. It is unnecessary to assure you of the friendship and affection with which I am, &c.

P. S. We have found Gordon's letters. They contain a demand of Asgill, as an officer protected by the capitulation of Yorktown. This I suppose is the reason they were not answered.

[1] Probably an error of the transcriber for *Asgill*.

TO JOHN FRANCIS MERCER.

MOUNT VERNON, 9 September, 1786.

DR. SIR,

Your favor of the 20th ulto. did not get to my hands 'till about the first of this month. It found me in a fever from which I am now but sufficiently recovered to attend to business. I mention this as the reason why your propositions have not been attended to before.

With respect to the first, I never mean (unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by which slavery in this country may be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees.[1]—With respect to the second, I never did, nor never intend to purchase a military certificate. I see no difference it makes

[1] As Mercer could pay his debt in no other way, Washington agreed to take six male negroes: "three or four young fellows for ditchers: and the like number of well grown lads for artificers. It is for you to determine whether you can supply me with such negroes. If you agree to do it, and will appoint a time, I would send for them, relying on your word, that the whole are healthy, and none of them addicted to running away. The latter I abominate, and unhealthy negroes, women or children, would not suit my purpose *on any terms*."—*Washington to Mercer*, 6 November, 1786.

"It is not my wish to be your competitor in the purchase of any of Mr. Hunter's tradesmen: especially as I am in a great degree principled against increasing my number of slaves by purchase, and suppose moreover that negroes sold on credit will go high. Yet as you are not disposed to buy the Bricklayer which is advertised for sale, for your own use, and find him in the vigor of life, from report a good workman and of tolerable character, and his price does not exceed one hundred, or a few more pounds, I should be glad if you would buy him for me. I have much work in this way to do this summer. If he has a family, with which he is to be sold; or from whom he would reluctantly part, I decline the purchase; his feelings I would not be the means of hurting in the latter case, nor *at any rate* be incumbered with the former."—*Washington to Henry Lee*, 4 February, 1787.

with you, (if it is one of the funds allotted for the discharge of my claim) who the purchaser is. If the depreciation between them and specie is three for one; you will have it in your power whilst at the receipt of Custom—Richmond—where it is said the great regulator of this business (Graves) resides—to convert them into specie at that rate. If the difference is more, there would be no propriety (if I inclined to deal in them at all) in my taking them at that exchange.

I shall rely upon your promise of £200—in five weeks from the date of your letter. It will enable me to pay the workmen which have been employed about this House all the Spring & Summer (some of whom are yet here); but there are two debts which press hard upon me—one of which, if there is no other method left—I must sell Land or Negroes to discharge. It is owing to the Govr. of New York (Clinton), who was so obliging as to borrow the sum of £2000 to answer some calls of mine;—to be paid in 12 months after the conclusion of Peace.

For this sum he became my security, & for what remains due (about £800 York currency) I am now paying an interest of 7 pr. ct.—but the high interest, tho' more than any estate can bear, I should not regard if my credit was not at stake to comply with the conditions of the loan. The other debt, tho' I am anxious to discharge it and the person to whom I owe it, I know wants it, yet it might I believe be put off a while longer—this sum is larger than the other. I am, &c.

TO WILLIAM TRIPLET.

SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 25 September, 1786.

If Mr. Lund Washington has not misconceived the conversation which passed between you and me, the day you lay ill in bed; or if you understood the matter in the same light he seems to have done, I find there is another mistake between us respecting Mrs. French's land, which it behooves me to clear up as soon as possible.

He thinks you asked me if I meant to take the land for the term of Robinson's lease; and that I answered yes.—If such a question and such an answer passed, we must some how or other have been at cross purposes; for clear and evident it must be, even to yourself, that I could have no intention of being concerned with the land at all, unless it was for Mrs. French's life. You may well recollect Sir, that I declared this in explicit terms in the conversation I had with you at my own house, and assigned reasons for it to you—namely—that if I got this and Mr. Manley's Land it was my intention to blend them, and my other plantations together, and to form entire new ones out of the whole; that I meant to go into an entire new course of cropping, &c., would lay off my fields accordingly in a permanent and lasting farm by Ditches and Hedges;—and that it was for this reason I was desirous of knowing this fall (before I went into such arrangement and expence), whether I had any chance of getting these places or not; because it might be too late afterwards to make any change in my plan. With this object in view, I must have

been insane, to have taken the plantation for the remainder of Robinson's lease only; first, because it is uncertain whether I could get possession of the Land or not, never having exchanged a word with Robinson on the subject, nor never intending to do it unless I had got the place to myself entirely; and secondly, if I did because I should not probably be able to compleat the plan of enclosures by the time the Lease would expire. What situation should I be in then? A new bargain under every disadvantage to make, or go back to my former grounds? In the latter case all my labor and expence would have been thrown away and my whole plan defeated.—In the former (that is supposing Robinson could not be got off by fair means, and Mr. Lee is of opinion, which opinion I had in my pocket at the time I call'd upon you in expectation of meeting Mrs. French that, without a regular demand of rent and reentry, which might be a tedious and expensive process in Courts, the Lease cannot be got aside,) under these circumstances I say, I should have made myself liable for the payment of Robinson's rent, without deriving a single advantage. Will any body think this reasonable; or suppose that whilst I retain my senses, I would do it?

As I do not recollect that in the course of my life I ever forfeited my word, or broke a promise made to any one, I have been thus particular to evince (if you understand the matter in the same light that Lund Washington did) that I was not attending to or did not understand the question.

I am sorry any mistake has happened and to convince you and Mrs. French that through the whole of this business, I meant to act upon fair, open and honorable grounds, I will, as mistakes have taken place, and as there is a difference of opinion respecting the annual value of the Lands and negroes, leave it to any person of her own choosing (Major Little if she pleases) to say, whether the rent after the expiration of Robinson's lease shall be £136, or £150 pr. an :—if he thinks one too much and the other too little, any sum between.—Mrs. French has declared that she neither wanted nor would take more than the intrinsic worth of the place.—I on the word of a man of honor declare that I do not desire it for a farthing less than the value ; for to make money by it was never my object ; but we differ in our sentiments of this. Is there any mode then so fair, as for an impartial person to see the place, and to hear what Mrs. French, or you in her behalf and myself will say on the subject, and then to decide according to this judgment from the facts ? and can there be any thing more favorable to her wishes than to have this determined by her friend in whom she places, I presume, implicit confidence ? I never exchanged a word directly nor indirectly with Majr. Little on the subject, but believing him to be a gentleman who will decide according to the dictates of his judgment, I am not afraid to entrust the matter to him, notwithstanding the family connexion between him and Mrs. French—In a word, I am so conscious of the rectitude of my intentions in the whole of this business, that it is a matter of the most perfect indif-

ference to me, to whom it is left.—and, tho' it may be supposed I have some sinister views in saying it, yet without the gift of prophecy, I will venture to pronounce, that if Mrs. French misses me as a Tenant, she will repent, long before Robinson's Lease expires, for having done so:—for I can assure her from an experience of more than twenty five years that there is a very wide difference between getting Tenants and getting rents. She may get a dozen of the first (& I have not the smallest doubt but she may); but if there is one among them who (having no other dependence than the produce of the Plantation) will pay her the latter without hard working and pinching her negroes, and a great deal of trouble and vexation to her, I shall be more mistaken than I ever was in any thing of the kind in my life.

This may not appear so to her at first view; because it is but too common to compare things without attending enough to the circumstances of them.

I have no doubt but that Mrs. French thinks it very strange that I should receive £120 a year rent from Mr. Dulaney, and scruple to give her £150—for rather more land, and twenty odd negroes, but has she considered that the one is accompanied by no charge except the land tax, and the other with many and heavy ones? And do not every body who have meadows, and have ever made an estimate of their value, know that an acre of tolerable good grass will pay all the expences of cutting, curing and stacking, and will put at least 40/ in the owner's

pocket annually? What then has Mr. Dulaney to do more than to keep up his fences to pay the rent? By his Advertisement of pasturage for Horses at 3/ pr. week he has —— acres. Suppose it —— only; the meadow alone without a single hand will yield him at least —— pr. ann: Is there a single acre of land on Mrs. French's plantation from which (besides cropping, so precarious) this is to be expected? Is there a single acre which can be converted into meadow? Is not the Land much worn, greatly exhausted and gullied in many places? None can deny it. But why need I enumerate or dwell on these things? Have I not put the matter upon as fair a footing as a man possibly can do? If Mrs French wants no more than the value as she has declared, what objection can she have to Majr. Little's saying what that value is? If this proposition is acceded to, the sooner it is communicated to me the better. I have never yet opened my mouth to Robinson on the subject of his Lease, nor never intended to do it unless I had got the Plantation for Mrs. French's life. When I sent the papers to Mr. Lee to draw the writings, I asked his opinion of the lease, which he gave, to the effect already mentioned.

It was for my private satisfaction; I asked it, for as I told you before and now repeat, I never had an intention to get him off otherwise than by fair means, this year or any other. This year will convince him or I am mistaken, that his inevitable ruin (if he has any thing to lose) will follow his holding it another year, if it is not the case already. I am, &c.

TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 30 September, 1786.

DEAR BUSHROD,

I was from home when your servant arrived, found him in a hurry to be gone when I returned. Have company in the house, and am on the eve of a journey up the river to meet the directors of the Potomac Company. These things combining will not allow me time to give any explicit answer to the question you have propounded.

Generally speaking, I have seen as much evil as good result from such societies as you describe the constitution of yours to be. They are a kind of *imperium in imperio*, and as often clog as facilitate public measures. I am no friend to institutions, except in local matters, which are wholly or in a great measure confined to the county of the delegates. To me it appears much wiser and more politic to choose able and honest representatives, and leave them, in all national questions to determine from the evidence of reason, and the facts which shall be adduced, when internal and external information is given to them in a collective state. What certainty is there that societies in a corner or remote part of a State can possess that knowledge, which is necessary for them to decide on many important questions which may come before an Assembly? What reason is there to expect, that the society itself may be accordant in opinion on such subjects? May not a few members of this society, more sagacious and designing than the rest, direct the measures of it to private views of their own?

May not this embarrass an honest, able delegate, who hears the voice of his country from all quarters, and thwart public measures?

These are first thoughts, but I give no decided opinion. Societies, nearly similar to such as you speak of, have lately been formed in Massachusetts, but what has been the consequence? Why, they have declared the senate useless, many other parts of the constitution unnecessary, salaries of public officers burthensome, &c. To point out the defects of the constitution, (if any existed,) in a decent way was proper enough; but they have done more. They first voted the courts of justice in the present circumstances of the State oppressive; and next by violence stop them; which has occasioned a very solemn proclamation and appeal from the governor to the people. You may say no such matters are in contemplation by your society. Granted. A snow-ball gathers by rolling. Possibly a line may be drawn between occasional meetings for special purposes, and a standing society to direct with local views and partial information the affairs of the nation, which cannot be well understood but by a large and comparative view of circumstances. Where is this so likely to enter as in the General Assembly of the people? What figure then must a delegate make, who comes there with his hands tied, and his judgment forestalled? His very instructors, perhaps, if they had nothing sinister in view, were they present at all the information and arguments, which would come forward, might be the first to change sentiments.

Hurried as this letter is, I am sensible I am writing to you upon a very important subject. I have no time to copy, correct, or even peruse it; for which reason I could wish to have it or a copy returned to me. George and his wife set off yesterday for the races at Fredericksburg. The rest of the family are well and join in love and good wishes for all at Bushefield. I am, &c.[1]

[1] To understand the full purport of the views here advanced, it is necessary to know the plan of the Society, as described by Mr. Bushrod Washington in his letter to his uncle.

"We have lately instituted a society in these lower counties," said he, "called the *Patriotic Society*. As it is something new, and there are a few men both good and sensible who disapprove of it, it will be a high gratification to me to know your sentiments of it, if you will be so kind as to communicate them. The object of the institution is to inquire into the state of public affairs; to consider in what the true happiness of the people consists, and what are the evils which have pursued, and still continue to molest us; the means of attaining the former, and escaping the latter; to inquire into the conduct of those, who represent us, and to give them our sentiments upon those laws, which ought to be or are already made.

"It will also be a considerable object to instil principles of frugality into the minds of the people, both by precept and example. If any real good should result from such a society, we hope similar ones will be generally instituted through the State; and, if so, they may establish a very formidable check upon evil-disposed men, who, clothed with power, make interested motives, and not public good, the rule of their conduct. These are the general outlines of the institution; and, whether in the event it may be beneficial or not, I think that it has taken its rise in virtuous motives. We have had a considerable meeting of the most sensible and respectable gentlemen in this part of the country, and another is to be held on Tuesday next, previous to the meeting of the Assembly. Our design is to hold another as soon as the Assembly has risen; the first to instruct our delegates what they ought to do, the next to inquire what they have done."—Bushfield, September 27th.

Such was Mr. Bushrod Washington's first outline of the Patriotic Society. In answering the above letter from his uncle, he added the following explanations:

"The motives which gave birth to the Society, were these. We conceived, that in a government where the voice and sentiments of the people are delivered by representation, the few who are elected to speak these sentiments are the servants of the electors; that in grand points of national concern, the people are

TO GEORGE AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 25 October, 1786.

DR. GEORGE,

It is natural for young married people who are launching into life, to look forward to a permanent

the best judges of their wants, their own interests, and can more sensibly feel those evils, which they wish to be corrected; that upon these two principles they have a right to instruct their delegates; and that silence at a time when they had reason to apprehend a conduct in these servants contrary to their wishes would be highly criminal. We thought that an appearance of corruption was discoverable in the mass of the people, or, what is as bad, a total insensibility to their public interest. Persuaded of this, and equally convinced that this inattention proceeded more from the want of information than from want of real virtue, a number of the principal gentlemen in these four counties determined to assemble, for the purpose of inquiring and deliberating upon such subjects as were of the most interesting consequence, and to communicate their sentiments to the people in the form of instructions; which, if approved by them, are signed and sent to their delegates; if otherwise, they continue only the opinion of a few, and can have no weight.

"The people's attention being thus awakened to their public concerns, they are led to investigate the causes of those evils which oppress them, and to endeavor by some method to relieve them. The most uninquiring mind must, when put in action, perceive that the defect is either in the manners of the people, or in the misconduct of those, who, being intrusted to form salutary laws, have adopted the most destructive measures. The evil when seen may easily be removed; and unless the majority of the people are vitiated, which can hardly be the case, they would certainly be led to apply the only two possible remedies; the one, to exert more zeal in making a judicious choice of delegates; the other, to reform their manners. I am fully convinced that nothing could be more effective of the prosperity of this country, than the method you have pointed out of electing honest and able representatives. To recommend this to the attention of the people is a principal object with this Society.

"Thus you will perceive, that this institution assumes no other power, than that of recommending to the people an attention to their own interests, and of furnishing them with the sentiments and opinions of a few, which they may either reject or adopt. It is true, that a few designing men might creep into these societies; but I should hope that a majority will be virtuous. If this should be the case, their recommendation may have happy consequences; if the majority should unhappily be vicious, they are but the opinions of a few expressed collectively. In this, however, I am resolved, that as soon as I perceive that other motives than those of the public good influence their conduct, I will quit them."—October 31st.

establishment. If they are prudent, they will be *reasonably* solicitous to provide for those who come after and have a right to look to them for support.

It is also natural for those who have passed the meridian of life, and are descending into the shades of darkness to make arrangements for the disposal of the property of which they are possessed. The first of these observations will apply to you, and the second to myself. I have no doubt but that you and Fanny are as happy and contented in this family as circumstances will admit. Yet something is still wanting to make that situation more stable and pleasing.

It is well known that the expensive manner in which I am as it were involuntarily compelled to live, will admit of no diminution in my income ; nor could it be expected if I now had, or ever should have descendants, that I either would or ought in justice to deprive them of what the laws of nature and the laws the land, if left to themselves, have declared to be their inheritance. The first however is not the case at present ; and the second not likely to be so hereafter.

Under this statement then I may add that it is my present intention to give you at my death, my landed property in the Neck, containing by estimation between two & three thousand acres by purchases from Wm. Clifton and George Brent, and that the reasons why I communicate this matter to you at this time, are that you may if you chuse it, seat the negroes, which Colo. Bassett has promised you upon that part of the cleared land on which Saml. Johnson formerly

lived; and under this expectation and prospect, that you may when it perfectly suits your inclination and convenience, be preparing for, and building thereon by degrees.

You may say, or think perhaps that as there is a contingency tacked to this intimation the offer is too precarious to hazard the expence of building; but if Mrs. Washington should survive me, there is a moral certainty of my dying without issue; and should I be the longest liver, the matter in my opinion, is hardly less certain; for while I retain the faculty of reasoning, I shall never marry a girl; and it is not probable that I should have children by a woman of an age suitable to my own, should I be disposed to enter into a second marriage. However, that there may be no possibility of your sustaining a loss, the matter may rest on the footing of compensation. I do therefore hereby declare it to be, and it is my express meaning, that if by the event above alluded to, or any other by which you may be deprived of the fee-simple in the lands herein mentioned, (unless a full equivalent is given in lieu thereof) that I will pay the cost of any buildings which you may erect on the premises.

The use of the Plantation, it is presumed will be adequate for the fences with which it may be enclosed, and for the labor arising from the cultivation—nothing therefore need be said on that head.

Here then, the prospect of a permanent inheritance is placed in the opposite scale of possible disappointment, and you are to judge for yourself.

I have been thus particular, because I would be clearly understood; because it is not my wish to deceive, and because I would not even raise an expectation not warranted from the premises by fair deduction.

Johnson's plantation, as I believe you know is destitute of fencing, but there is timber at hand. The cleared land, whatever may have been the original quality of it, now is, by use, and more so by abuse much gullied and in bad condition; but as there is a sufficiency of it for the hands you will get, it may soon by care, good management and a proper course of cropping, be recovered.

One thing more and I will close this letter. Do not infer from my proposing it to you to build, that I meant it as a hint for you to prepare another home. I had no such idea. To point you to a settlement which you might make at leisure, & with convenience was all I had in view. More than once, I have informed you that in proportion as age and its concomitants encrease upon me, I shall stand in need of some person in whose industry and integrity I can confide for assistance. The double ties by which you are connected with this family (to say nothing of the favorable opinion we have of you,) by marriage union, have placed you differently from any other of my relations for this purpose; because no other married couple could give, or probably would receive the same satisfaction by living in it as you and Fanny do. But whether you remain in the same house, or at a future day may remove to the place proposed, your services

will be convenient and essential to me; because with your aid I shall be able to manage my concerns without having recourse to a Steward, which comports neither with my interest nor inclination to employ.

With very affectionate regard I am, &c.

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 31 October, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am indebted to you for your several favors of the 1st, 11th, and 17th of this instant, and shall reply to them in the order of their dates. But first let me thank you for the interesting communications imparted by them.

The picture which you have exhibited, and the accounts which are published of the commotions and temper of numerous bodies in the eastern States, are equally to be lamented and deprecated. They exhibit a melancholy proof of what our transatlantic foe has predicted; and of another thing perhaps, which is still more to be regretted, and is yet more unaccountable, that mankind, when left to themselves, are unfit for their own government. I am mortified beyond expression when I view the clouds, that have spread over the brightest morn that ever dawned upon any country. In a word, I am lost in amazement when I behold what intrigue, the interested views of desperate characters, ignorance, and jealousy of the minor part, are capable of effecting, as a

scourge on the major part of our fellow citizens of the Union; for it is hardly to be supposed, that the great body of the people, though they will not act, can be so shortsighted or enveloped in darkness, as not to see rays of a distant sun through all this mist of intoxication and folly.[1]

You talk, my good Sir, of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts. I know not where that influence is to be found, or, if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for the disorders. *Influence* is no *government*. Let us have one by which our lives, liberties, and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once. Under these impressions, my humble opinion is, that there is a call for decision. Know precisely what the insurgents aim at. If they have *real* grievances, redress them if possible; or acknowledge the justice of them, and your inability to do it in the present moment. If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once. If this is inadequate, *all* will be convinced, that the superstructure is bad, or wants support. To be more exposed in the eyes of the world, and more contemptible than we already are, is hardly possible. To delay one or the other of these, is to exasperate on the one hand, or to give confidence on

[1] "For God's sake tell me what is the cause of all these commotions? Do they proceed from licentiousness, British influence, disseminated by the Tories, or real grievances which admit of redress? If the latter, why were they delayed till the public mind had become so much agitated? If the former, why are not the powers of government tried at once? It is as well to be without, as not to live under their exercise. Commotions of this sort, like snow-balls, gather strength as they roll, if there is no opposition in the way to divide and crumble them."—*Washington to Humphreys*, 22 October, 1786.

the other, and will add to their numbers; for, like snow-balls, such bodies increase by every movement, unless there is something in the way to obstruct and crumble them before the weight is too great and irresistible.

These are my sentiments. Precedents are dangerous things. Let the reins of government then be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon whilst it has an existence.

With respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, you already know my sentiments thereon. They have been uniformly the same, and, as I have observed to you in a former letter, are controverted by one consideration, only of weight, and that is, the operation which the conclusion of it may have on the minds of the western settlers, who will not consider the subject in a relative point of view, or on a comprehensive scale, and may be influenced by the demagogues of the country to acts of extravagance and desperation, under a popular declamation, that their interests are sacrificed. Colonel Mason at present is in a fit of the gout. What [his] sentiments on the subject are, I know not, nor whether he will be able to attend the Assembly during the present session. For some reasons, however, (which need not be mentioned,) I am inclined to believe he will advocate the navigation of that river. But in all matters of great national moment, the only true line of conduct, in my opinion, is dispassionately to compare the advantages and dis-

advantages of the measure proposed, and decide from the balance. The lesser evil, where there is a choice of them, should always yield to the greater. What benefits, more than we now enjoy, are to be obtained by such a treaty as you have delineated with Spain, I am not enough of a commercial man to give any opinion on.[1] The china came to hand without much damage & I thank you for your attention in the procuring & forwarding it.[2] Mrs. Washington joins me in best wishes for Mrs. Lee and yourself.

I am, dear Sir, &c.[3]

[1] *From Mr. Lee's Letter.*—"The eastern States consider a commercial connexion with Spain as the only remedy for the distresses, which oppress their citizens, most of which they say flow from the decay of their commerce. Their delegates have consequently zealously pressed the formation of this connexion, as the only effectual mode to revive the trade of their country. In this opinion they have been joined by two of the middle States. On the other hand, Virginia has with equal zeal opposed the connexion, because the project involves expressly the disuse of the navigation of the Mississippi for a given time, and eventually they think will sacrifice our right to it. The delegation is under instructions from the State on this subject. They have acted in obedience to their instructions, and, myself excepted, in conformity to their private sentiments. I confess that I am by no means convinced of the justice or policy of our instructions, and very much apprehend, unless they are repealed by the present Assembly, the fatal effects of discord in council will be experienced by the United States in a very high degree."—New York, October 11th.

[2] Some china marked with the order of the Cincinnati.

[3] While Kentucky was seeking to become a separate State, its agent before the legislature of Virginia, John Marshall, wrote: "The negotiation which has been opened with Spain, for ceding the navigation of the Mississippi—a negotiation so dishonorable and injurious to America, so destructive of the natural rights of the western world—is warmly opposed by this country [Virginia], and for this purpose the most pointed instructions are given to our delegates in Congress. I persuade myself that this negotiation will terminate in securing instead of ceding that great point." On August 3d, 1786, Jay had announced to Congress his conclusion that no agreement could be reached with Spain without surrendering the claim to the navigation of the Mississippi for a limited period.

TO JAMES MADISON.

MOUNT VERNON, 5 November, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I thank you for the communications in your letter of the 1st instant. The decision of the House on the question respecting a paper emission is portentous, I hope, of an auspicious session. It certainly may be classed with the important questions of the present day, and merited the serious attention of the Assembly. Fain would I hope, that the great and most important of all subjects, the *federal government*, may be considered with that calm and deliberate attention, which the magnitude of it so critically and loudly calls for at this critical moment. Let prejudices, unrea-

An attempt by the southern delegates to take the negotiation out of Jay's direction failed, and full powers were conferred upon him, powers that he was seeking to carry into effect when the new government interrupted his diplomatic contentions with Gardoqui. The intelligence of the grant of these powers, however, awoke a strong feeling of resentment among the people of the back country, a resentment that was directed against the Confederation, for the legislature of Virginia had promptly taken up the cause of the West, and insisted upon the claims to their fullest extent. (Resolution, 29 November, 1786.)

"It will be to be regretted if a contrariety of sentiments, respecting the navigation of the Mississippi, should impede that harmony and mutual intercourse of interests so essential between nations, whose territories border on each other. I would fain hope, therefore, that the true and reciprocal benefits of Spain and the United States in this case, as well as in all others which may arise between them, will be coolly and dispassionately considered before the ultimatum on either side is fixed. There is no ground, on which treaties can be formed that will be found permanent or satisfactory, unless they have these for their basis. But, however necessary it may be to inculcate this doctrine upon others, your Excellency I am sure is too much a politician to need the remark, and too much a friend to these States to insist upon any measure, which the essential interests of your nation or the orders of your court may not have directed, incompatible therewith."—*Washington to Gardoqui*, 1 December, 1786.

sonable jealousies, and local interests, yield to reason and liberality. Let us look to our national character, and to things beyond the present moment. No morn ever dawned more favorably than ours did; and no day was ever more clouded than the present. Wisdom and good examples are necessary at this time to rescue the political machine from the impending storm. Virginia has now an opportunity to set the latter, and has enough of the former, I hope, to take the lead in promoting this great and arduous work. Without an alteration in our political creed, the superstructure we have been seven years in raising, at the expense of so much treasure and blood, must fall. We are fast verging to anarchy and confusion.

By a letter which I have received from General Knox, who had just returned from Massachusetts, whither he had been sent by Congress consequent of the commotions in that State, is replete with melancholy accounts of the temper and designs of a considerable part of that people. Among other things he says:

"Their creed is, that the property of the United States has been protected from the confiscation of Britain by the joint exertions of *all*; and therefore ought to be the *common property of all*; and he that attempts opposition to this creed, is an enemy to equity and justice, and ought to be swept from off the face of the earth." Again: "They are determined to annihilate all debts, public and private, and have agrarian laws, which are easily effected by the means of unfunded paper money, which shall be a tender in all cases whatever." He adds: "The number of these people amount in Massachusetts to about one fifth part of several populous counties, and to them may be collected people of similar sentiments from the States of Rhode Island,

Connecticut, and New Hampshire, so as to constitute a body of about twelve or fifteen thousand desperate and unprincipled men. They are chiefly of the young and active part of the community."

How melancholy is the reflection, that in so short a space we should have made such large strides towards fulfilling the predictions of our transatlantic foes! "Leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve." Will not the wise and good strive hard to avert this evil? Or will their supineness suffer ignorance, and the arts of self-interested, designing, disaffected, and desperate characters, to involve this great country in wretchedness and contempt? What stronger evidence can be given of the want of energy in our government, than these disorders? If there is not power in it to check them, what security has a man for life, liberty, or property? To you I am sure I need not add aught on this subject. The consequences of a lax or inefficient government are too obvious to be dwelt upon. Thirteen sovereignties pulling against each other, and all tugging at the federal head, will soon bring ruin on the whole; whereas a liberal and energetic constitution, well guarded and closely watched to prevent encroachments, might restore us to that degree of respectability and consequences, to which we had a fair claim and the brightest prospect of attaining. With sentiments of very great esteem and regard.

I am, dear Sir, &c.[1]

[1] *From Mr. Madison's reply.*—"The intelligence from General Knox, is gloomy indeed, but is less so than the colors in which I had it through another

TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 15 November, 1786.

DEAR BUSHROD,

Your letter of the 31st of October in reply to mine of the 30th of September came safe to hand. It was not the intention of my former letter either to condemn, or give my voice in favor of the Patriotic Society, of which you have now, but not before, declared yourself a member; nor do I mean to do it now. I offered observations under the information I had then received, the weight of which was to be considered. As first thoughts, they were undigested, and might be very erroneous.

That representatives ought to be the mouth of

channel. If the lessons which it inculcates should not work the proper impressions on the American public, it will be a proof that our case is desperate. Judging from the present temper and apparent views of our Assembly, I have some ground for leaning to the side of hope. The vote against paper money has been followed by two others of great importance. By one of them, sundry petitions for applying a scale of depreciation to the military certificates was *unanimously* rejected. By the other the expediency of complying with the recommendation from Annapolis, in favor of a general revision of the federal system, was *unanimously* agreed to. A bill for the purpose is now depending, and in a form which attests the most federal spirit. As no opposition has been yet made, and it is ready for the third reading, I expect it will soon be before the public.

"It has been thought advisable to give this subject a very solemn dress, and all the weight which could be derived from a single State. This idea will also be pursued in the selection of characters to represent Virginia in the federal convention. You will infer our earnestness on this point from the liberty, which will be used, of placing your name at the head of them. How far this liberty may correspond with the ideas, by which you ought to be governed, will be best decided when it must ultimately be determined. In every event, it will assist powerfully in marking the zeal of our legislature, and its opinion of the magnitude of the occasion."—Richmond, November 8th.

their constituents, I do not deny; nor do I mean to call in question the right of the latter to instruct them. It is to the embarrassment, into which they may be thrown by these instructions in *national matters*, that my objections lie. In speaking of national matters I look to the federal government, which, in my opinion, it is the interest of every State to support; and to do this, as there are a variety of interests in the Union, there must be a yielding of the parts to coalesce the whole. Now a county, a district, or even a State, might decide on a measure, which, though apparently for the benefit of it in its unconnected state, may be repugnant to the interests of the nation, and eventually to the State itself, as a part of the confederation. If, then, members go instructed to the Assembly from certain districts, the requisitions of Congress repugnant to the sense of them, and all the lights which they may receive from the communications of that body to the legislature, must be unavailing, although the nature and necessity of them, when the reasons therefor are fully expounded (which can only be given by Congress to the Assembly through the Executive, and which come before them in their legislative capacity), are as clear as the sun. In local matters which concern the district, or things which respect the internal policy of the State, there may be nothing amiss in instructions. In national matters, also, the *sense*, but not the *law* of the district may be given, leaving the delegates to judge from the nature of the case and the evidence before them.

The instructions of your Society, as far as they have gone, meet my entire approbation, except in the article of "*commutables.*" Here, if I understand the meaning and design of the clause, I must disagree to it most heartily; for, if the intention of it is to leave it optional with the person taxed, to pay any staple commodity (tobacco would be least exceptionable) in lieu of specie, the people will be burthened, a few speculators enriched, and the public derive no benefit from it. Have we not had a recent and melancholy proof of this during the war in the provision tax? Did not the people pay this in some way or other, perhaps badly? And was not the army almost starved? Can any instance be given, where the public has sold tobacco, hemp, flour, or any other commodity upon as good terms as individuals have done it? Must not there be places of deposit for these *commutables;* collectors, storekeepers, and the like, employed? These, rely on it, will sink one half, and a parcel of speculators will possess themselves of the other half. It was to these things, that we owe the present depravity of the minds of so many people of this country, and filled it with so many knaves and designing characters.

Among the great objects, which you took into consideration at your meeting at Richmond, how comes it to pass, that you never turned your eyes to the inefficacy of the federal government, so as to instruct your delegates to accede to the propositions of the commissioners at Annapolis, or to devise some other mode to give it that energy, which is necessary to

support a national character? Every man, who considers the present constitution of it, and sees to what it is verging, trembles. The fabric, which took nine years, at the expense of much blood and treasure, to rear, now totters to the foundation, and without support must soon fall.

The determination of your Society to promote frugality and industry by example, to encourage manufactures, and to avoid dissipation, is highly praiseworthy. These, and premiums for the most useful discoveries in agriculture within your district, the most profitable course of cropping, and the best method of fencing to save timber, would soon make us a rich and happy people. With every good wish for you and yours, in which your aunt joins.

I am, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 November, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

Not having sent to the post-office with my usual regularity, your favor of the 8th did not reach me in time for an earlier acknowledgment than of this date. It gives me the most sensible pleasure to hear, that the acts of the present session are marked with wisdom, justice, and liberality. They are the palladium of good policy, and the sure paths that lead to national happiness. Would to God every State would let these be the leading features of their constituent characters. Those threatening clouds, which seem

ready to burst on the confederacy, would soon dispel. The unanimity with which the bill was received for appointing commissioners agreeably to the recommendation of the convention at Annapolis, and the uninterrupted progress it has met with since, are indications of a favorable issue. It is a measure of equal necessity and magnitude, and may be the spring of reanimation.

Although I had bid adieu to the public walks of life in a public manner, and had resolved never more to tread on public ground, yet if, upon an occasion so interesting to the well-being of the confederacy, it should have appeared to have been the wish of the Assembly to have employed me with other associates in the business of revising the federal system, I should, from a sense of the obligation I am under for repeated proofs of confidence in me, more than from any opinion I should have entertained of my usefulness, have obeyed its call; but it is now out of my power to do this with any degree of consistency. The cause I will mention.

I presume you heard, Sir, that I was first appointed, and have since been rechosen, President of the Society of the Cincinnati; and you may have understood also, that the triennial general meeting of this body is to be held in Philadelphia the first Monday in May next. Some particular reasons, combining with the peculiar situation of my private concerns, the necessity of paying attention to them, a wish for retirement and relaxation from public cares, and rheumatic pains which I begin to feel very sensibly, induced me

on the 31st ultimo to address a circular letter to each State society, informing them of my intention not to be at the next meeting, and of my desire not to be rechosen President. The Vice-President[1] is also informed of this, that the business of the Society may not be impeded by my absence. Under these circumstances it will readily be perceived, that I could not appear at the same time and place on any other occasion, without giving offence to a very worthy and respectable part of the community, the late officers of the American army. I feel as you do for our acquaintance Colo. Lee; better never have delegated than left him out, unless some daring impropriety of conduct had been ascribed to him.[2] I hear with pleasure that you are in the New choice. With sentiments of the highest esteem and affection,

I am, &c.

TO FIELDING LEWIS.

MOUNT VERNON, 4 December, 1786.

SIR,

Your letter of the 11th of Octor. never came to my hands 'till yesterday.—Altho' your disrespectful conduct towards me, in coming into this country and spending weeks therein without ever coming near me, entitles you to very little notice or favor from me;

[1] General Gates.

[2] It is not very clear why Henry Lee was dropped from the Virginia delegation; but his supposed heterodoxy on the Mississippi question was mentioned as one reason. Jones, the delegate chosen, declined to serve, and Lee was unanimously named in his place.

yet I consent that you may get timber from off my Land in Fauquier County to build a house on your Lott in Rectertown. Having granted this, now let me ask you what your views were in purchasing a Lott in a place which, I presume, originated with and will end in two or three Gin shops, which probably will exist no longer than they serve to ruin the proprietors, and those who make the most frequent applications to them. I am, &c.

TO P. MARSTELLER.

MOUNT VERNON, 15 December, 1786.

SIR,

To the severity of the weather whch has in a manner shut every thing up, and put a stop to all intercourse; and to some other circumstances unnecessary to mention, is to be ascribed my silence 'till now; and even now, when I recollect how fully I have already explained my ideas to you on what is intended to be the subject of this letter, I find that I have hardly anything to trouble you with by way of illucidation.

I will just observe, however, that having been well informed that seasons and circumstances have *occurred* and probably *will arrive again* when goods by vendue have sold considerably below the sterlg. cost of them;—nay that they have even been bought for the nominal sum currency, which they cost sterling in the countries from whence they were imported; and having found from experience, that I derive little or

no advantage from the ready money payments I make for such articles as are requisite for the use of my estate, (when I go to the stores in Alexandria,) I had determined to make the proposition to you which was pretty fully explained in the conversation I had with you at our last inteview as has been already mentioned, and which in a word is as follows :—

To allow you a Commission of 2½ p. ct. (which you, yourself declared was sufficient,) upon all purchases you shall make for me at Vendue, of articles which may from time to time be enumerated to you. It is your interest, I know to sell high :—it is mine to buy low :—but there is nothing incompatible that I can conceive in your agency in both these cases ; for when the former is the case, I mean not to become a purchaser—when the latter happens, which no skill or exertion of yours can at all times prevent, is the moment of which I mean, thro' your attention to the business to avail myself for supplies. To your knowledge of the goods which are intended for sale ; the circumstances of the sale, and to your honor of which I entertain a very favorable opinion from the good report made of it by others, I entirely confide for the management. The payments shall always keep pace with the purchases ; you have nothing more to do therefore than to give intimation of the latter by a line lodged at the post office, to receive the former, and were you now and then to add a concise list of the principal articles which are for sale, it would be obliging.

To particularize all the articles which are necessary

for the use of a large family, would be as tedious as unnecessary. Every merchant who retails, and every man who provides for one, can be at no loss for them. The heavy articles, and such as at present occur to me are enumerated in the enclosed list;—in which you will perceive no mention is made of coarse woolens; because of these I manufacture a sufficiency to clothe my out-door negroes—Nor have I said any thing of Wines, because I import my own;—but of the latter, if good Claret should at any time go cheap, I would take two or three Boxes;—I have been obliged to buy about 200 ells of Ticklenburg for present use:—perhaps the 2 or 300 more enumerated in the enclosed, may suffice—possibly more may be wanted.—The Blankets will not be wanted before next Autumn. Of Sugars my demand (as a private family) is great and constant:—but of Coffee and Molasses I have on hand a large stock.

It is scarcely necessary to impress on you the idea that it is the prospect of very cheap buying which has induced me to adopt this mode of obtaining my supplies; and that unless the end is accomplished, my purposes will not be answered, nor my inclination gratified by it; but to prevent mistakes, I explicitly declare it. Few of the enumerated articles am I in present want of—those for which I shall soonest have a call, are marked thus * in the margin; many of the others I may dispense with a year, or two years. —They stand in the List as a memento only, in case very favorable moments present, for the purchase of them.

I am told it sometimes happens that Goods which come under the imputation of being damaged, tho' in fact they have received little or no real injury, are frequently sold uncommonly low indeed—particularly Bale blanketing, and other Bale goods.—To embrace such opportunities is recommended, not in this, judgment and a close inspection are necessary; for it is not the lowest priced goods that are always the cheapest—the quality is, or ought to be as much an object with the purchaser, as the price.

I pray you to accept my thanks for the trouble you had with the German redemptioners which were purchased for me;—the expence my nephew the bearer of this will pay. I am, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON.

MOUNT VERNON, 16 December, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 7th came to my hands the evening before last. The resolutions, which you say are inserted in the papers, I have not yet seen.[1] The latter come irregularly, though I am a subscriber to *Hay's Gazette*.

Besides the reasons, which were assigned in my circular letter to the several State societies of the Cincinnati, for my non-attendance at the next gen-

[1] On the Mississippi question, "I am entirely convinced, from what I observe here, that unless the project of Congress [for ceding to Spain the Mississippi for 25 years] can be reversed, the hopes of carrying this State into a proper federal system will be demolished."—*Madison to Washington*, 7 December, 1786.

eral meeting to be holden at Philadelphia on the first Monday in May next, there existed one, of a political nature, which operated stronger on my mind, than all the others, and which in confidence I will now communicate to you.

When this Society was first formed, I am persuaded not a member of it conceived, that it would give birth to those jealousies, or be charged with those dangers, real or imaginary, with which the minds of many, and of some respectable characters in these States, seem to be agitated. The motives, which induced the officers to enter into it, were, I am positive, truly and frankly recited in the institution ; one of which, and the principal, was to establish a charitable fund for the relief of such of their compatriots, the widows and descendants of them, as were fit objects for such support, and for whom no public provision had been made by the public. But, the trumpet being sounded, the alarm was spreading far and wide. I readily perceived, therefore, that, unless a modification of the plan could be effected (to annihilate the Society altogether was impracticable on account of the foreign officers who had been admitted), irritations would arise, which would soon draw a line between the Society and their fellow citizens.

To avoid this, to conciliate the affections, and to convince the world of the purity of the plan, I exerted myself, and with much difficulty effected the changes, which appeared in the recommendation that proceeded from the general meeting to those of individual States. But the accomplishment of it was not easy ; and I

have since heard, that, while some States have acceded to the recommendation, others are not disposed to do so, alleging that unreasonable prejudices, and ill-founded jealousies, ought not to influence a measure laudable in its institution, and salutary in its objects and operation.

Under these circumstances it may readily be conceived, that the part I should have had to have acted would have been delicate. On the one hand, I might be charged with dereliction of the officers, who had nobly supported me, and had even treated me with uncommon attention and attachment; on the other, with supporting a measure incompatible with republican principles. I thought it best, therefore, without assigning this (the principal) reason, to decline the presidency and to excuse my attendance on the ground, which is firm and just, of necessity of attending to my private concerns, and in conformity to my determination of spending the remainder of my days in a state of retirement; and to indisposition occasioned by rheumatic complaints with which at times I am a good deal afflicted; professing at the same time my entire approbation of the institution as altered, and the pleasure I feel at the subsidence of those jealousies, which have yielded to the change, *presuming* on the general adoption of it.

I have been thus particular, to show, that, under circumstances like these, I should feel myself in an awkward situation to be in Philadelphia on another public occasion, during the sitting of this Society. That the present moment is pregnant of great and

strange events, none who will cast their eyes around them can deny. What may be brought forth between this and the first of May, to remove the difficulties, which at present labor in my mind against the acceptance of the honor, which has lately been conferred on me by the Assembly, is not for me to predict; but I should think it incompatible with that candor, which ought to characterize an honest mind, not to declare, that, under my present view of the matter, I should be too much embarrassed by the meeting of these two bodies in the same place at the same moment, after what I have written to be easy in my situation, and therefore that it would be improper to let my appointment stand in the way of another. Of this, you, who have had the whole matter before you, will judge; for, having received no other than private intimation of my election, and unacquainted with the formalities, which are or ought to be used on these occasions, silence may be deceptious, or considered as disrespectful. The imputation of both or either I would wish to avoid. This is the cause of the present disclosure to you immediately upon my receipt of your letter, which has been locked up by ice; for I have had no communication with Alexandria for many days, till the day before yesterday.

My sentiments are decidedly against Commutables; for sure I am it will be found a tax without a revenue. That the people will be burthened, the public expectation deceived, and a few speculators *only* enriched. Thus the matter will end, after the morals "*of some*" are more corrupted than they

now are—and the minds of *all*, filled with more leaven, by finding themselves taxed, and the public demands in full force. Tobacco, on acct. of the public places of deposit and from the accustomed mode of negotiating the article, is certainly better fitted for a Commutable than any other production of this country, but if I understand the matter rightly (I have it from report only) will any man pay five pounds in specie for five taxables when the same sum (supposing Tobacco not to exceed 20s. per cwt.), will purchase 500 lbs. of Tobo., and this if at 28s. will discharge the tax on Seven? And will not the man who neither makes, nor can easily procure this commodity, complain of the inequality of such a mode, especially when he finds that the revenue is diminished by the difference be it what it may between the real and nominal price? And that he is again to be taxed to make this good. These and such like things in my humble opinion are extremely hurtful and are among the principal causes that produce depravity and corruption, without accomplishing the object in view; for it is not the shadow, but the substance with which taxes must be paid, if we mean to be honest. With sentiments, &c.[1]

[1] In replying to this letter Mr. Madison said: "I have considered well the circumstances which it confidentially discloses, as well as those contained in your preceding favor. The difficulties, which they oppose to an acceptance of the appointment, in which you are included, can as little be denied as they can fail to be regretted. But I am still inclined to think, that the posture of our affairs, if it should continue, would prevent any criticism on the situation, which the contemporary meetings would place you in; and wish that at least a door could be left open for your acceptance hereafter, in case the gathering clouds should become so dark and menacing, as to supersede every consideration but that of our national existence or safety. A suspense of your ultimate determination would be

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, 21 December, 1786.

SIR,

I had not the honor of receiving your Excellency's favor of the 6th, with the enclosure, till last night.[2] Sensible as I am of the honor conferred on me by the general Assembly of this Commonwealth, in appointing me one of the deputies to a convention proposed to be held in the city of Philadelphia in May next, for the purpose of revising the federal constitution, and desirous as I am on all occasions of testifying a ready obedience to the calls of my country; yet, Sir, there exist at this moment circumstances, which I am persuaded will render this fresh instance of confidence incompatible with other measures, which I had previously adopted, and from which seeing little prospect of disengaging myself, it would be disingenuous not to express a wish, that some other character, on whom greater reliance can be had, may be substituted in my place; the probability of my non-attendance being too great to continue my appointment.

nowise inconvenient in a public view, as the executive are authorized to fill vacancies, and can fill them at any time; and, in any event, three out of seven deputies are authorized to represent the State. How far it may be admissible in another view, will depend perhaps in some measure on the chance of your finally undertaking the service, but principally on the correspondence, which is now passing on the subject between yourself and the governor."

[1] He had recently been elected as successor to Patrick Henry.

[2] Communicating official intelligence of his having been unanimously chosen one of the delegates from Virginia for attending a general convention. His name was placed at the head of the deputation, consisting of seven persons as follows: George Washington, Patrick Henry, Edmund Randolph, John Blair, James Madison, George Mason, and George Wythe.

As no mind can be more deeply impressed than mine is with the critical situation of our affairs, resulting in a great measure from the want of efficient powers in the federal head, and due respect to its ordinances, so consequently those, who do engage in the important business of removing these defects, will carry with them every good wish of mine, which the best dispositions towards the obtainment can bestow. I am, &c.[1]

TO DAVID HUMPHREYS.

MOUNT VERNON, 26 December, 1786.

MR DEAR HUMPHREYS,

I am much indebted to you for your several favors of the 1st, 9th, and 16th of November. The last came first. Mr. Morse, having in mind the old proverb, was determined not to make more haste than good speed in prosecuting his journey to Georgia; so I got the two first lately.

For your publication respecting the treatment of Captain Asgill, I am exceedingly obliged to you. The manner of making it is the best that could be

[1] To the above letter Governor Randolph replied. "Although compelled, by duty to lay before the Council your answer to my notification of your appointment to Philadelphia, I was happy to find them concurring with me in the propriety of entreating you not to decide on a refusal immediately. Perhaps the obstacles now in view may be removed before May; and the nomination of a successor, if necessary at all, will be as effectually made some time hence as now. Perhaps too (and indeed I fear the event) every other consideration may seem of little weight, when compared with the crisis, which may then hang over the United States. I hope, therefore, that you will excuse me for holding up your letter for the present, and waiting until time shall discover the result of the commotions now prevailing."—Richmond, January 4th, 1787.

devised, whilst the matter will prove the illiberality as well as the fallacy of the reports, which have been circulated on that occasion, and which are fathered upon that officer as the author.

It is with the deepest and most heartfelt concern I perceive, by some late paragraphs extracted from the Boston papers, that the insurgents of Massachusetts, far from being satisfied with the redress offered by their General Court, are still acting in open violation of law and government, and have obliged the chief magistrate in a decided tone to call upon the militia of the State to support the constitution. What, gracious God! is man, that there should be such inconsistency and perfidiousness in his conduct? It is but the other day, that we were shedding our blood to obtain the constitutions under which we now live; constitutions of our own choice and making; and now we are unsheathing the sword to overturn them. The thing is so unaccountable, that I hardly know how to realize it, or to persuade myself, that I am not under the illusion of a dream.

My mind, previous to the receipt of your letter of the 1st ultimo, had often been agitated by a thought similar to the one you have expressed respecting an old friend of yours; but Heaven forbid that a crisis should come, when he shall be driven to the necessity of making choice of either of the alternatives there mentioned.[1] Let me entreat you, my dear Sir, to

[1] The following extract will explain this paragraph, and show that the "old friend" alluded to was General Washington himself.

"In case of civil discord," said Mr. Humphreys, "I have already told you,

keep me advised of the situation of affairs in your quarter. I can depend upon your accounts. Newspaper paragraphs, unsupported by other testimony, are often contradictory and bewildering. At one time, these insurgents are spoken of as a mere mob; at other times, as systematic in all their proceedings. If the first, I would fain hope, that like other mobs it will, however formidable, be of short duration. If the latter, there are surely men of consequence and abilities behind the curtain, who move the puppets, the designs of whom may be deep and dangerous. They may be instigated by British counsel, actuated by ambitious motives, or, being influenced by dishonest principles, had rather see the country in the horrors of civil discord, than do what justice would dictate to an honest mind.

I had scarcely despatched my circular letters to the several State Societies of the Cincinnati, when I received letters from some of the principal members of our Assembly, expressing a wish, that they might be permitted to name me as one of the deputies of this State to the convention proposed to be held at Philadelphia the first of May next. I immediately wrote to my particular friend Mr. Madison, and gave similar reasons to the others. The answer is contained in the extract No. 1; in reply I got the extract No 2. This obliges me to be more explicit and confidential

it was seriously my opinion, that you could not remain neuter, and that you would be obliged in self-defence to take part on one side or the other, or withdraw from the continent. Your friends are of the same opinion; and I believe you are convinced it is impossible to have more disinterested and zealous friends than those, who have been about your person."—New Haven, November 1st.

with him on points which a recurrence to the conversations we have had on this subject will bring to your mind and save me the hazard of a recital in this letter. Since this interchange of letters I have received from the Governor the letter No. 4 and have written No. 5 in answer to it. Should this matter be further pressed, (which I hope it will not, as I have no inclination to go,) what had I best do? You, as an indifferent person, and one who is much better acquainted with the sentiments and views of the Cincinnati than I am, (for in this State, where the recommendations of the general meeting have been agreed to, hardly any thing is said about it,) as also with the temper of the people and state of politics at large, can determine upon better ground and fuller evidence than myself; especially as you have opportumities of knowing in what light the States to the eastward consider the convention, and the measures they are pursuing to contravene or to give efficiency to it.

On the last occasion,[1] only five States were represented; none east of New York. Why the New England governments did not appear, I am yet to learn; for, of all others, the distractions, and turbulent temper of these people would, I should have thought, have afforded the strongest evidence of the necessity of competent powers somewhere. That the federal government is nearly if not quite at a stand, none will deny. The first question then is, shall it be annihilated or supported? If the latter, the proposed convention is an object of the first magni-

[1] The convention at Annapolis.

tude, and should be sustained by all the friends of the present constitution. In the other case, if, on a full and dispassionate revision, the continuance shall be adjudged impracticable or unwise, as only delaying an event which must ere long take place, would it not be better for such a meeting to suggest some other, to avoid if possible civil discord or other impending evils? I must candidly confess, as we could not remain quiet more than three or four years in time of peace, under the constitutions of our own choosing, which it was believed, in many States at least, were formed with deliberation and wisdom, I see little prospect either of our agreeing upon any other, or that we should remain long satisfied under it if we could. Yet I would wish any thing and every thing essayed to prevent the effusion of blood, and to avert the humiliating and contemptible figure we are about to make in the annals of mankind.

If this second attempt to convene the States, for the purposes proposed by the report of the partial representation at Annapolis in September, should also prove abortive, it may be considered as an unequivocal evidence, that the States are not likely to agree on any general measure, which is to pervade the Union, and of course that there is an end of federal government. The States, therefore, which make the last dying essay to avoid these misfortunes, would be mortified at the issue, and their deputies would return home chagrined at their ill success and disappointment. This would be a disagreeable circumstance for any one of them to be in, but more particularly so for a person in my situation. If no

further application is made to me, of course I shall not attend; if there is, I am under no obligation to do it, but, as I have had so many proofs of your friendship, know your abilities to judge, and your opportunities of learning the politics of the day on the points I have enumerated, you would oblige me by a full and confidential communication of your sentiments thereon.

Peace and tranquillity prevail in this State. The Assembly, by a very great majority and in very emphatical terms, have rejected an application for paper money, and spurned the idea of fixing the value of military certificates by a scale of depreciation. In some other respects, too, the proceedings of the present session have been marked with justice, and a strong desire of supporting the federal system. Although I lament the effect I am pleased at the cause which has deprived us of the pleasure of your aid in the attack of Christmas pies. We had one yesterday on which all the company tho' pretty numerous, were hardly able to make an impression. Mrs. Washington & George & his wife (Mr. Lear I had occasion to send to the Western Country) join in affectionate regards for you and with sentiments, &c. I am, &c.

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 26 December 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * I feel, my dear General Knox, infinitely more than I can express to you, for the disorders, which have arisen in these States. Good God! Who, besides

a Tory, could have foreseen, or a Briton predicted them? Were these people wiser than others, or did they judge of us from the corruption and depravity of their own hearts? The latter I am persuaded was the case and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America we are very little if anything behind them in dispositions to every thing that is bad.

I do assure you, that even at this moment, when I reflect upon the present prospect of our affairs, it seems to me to be like the vision of a dream. My mind can scarcely realize it as a thing in actual existence; so strange, so wonderful does it appear to me. In this, as in most other matters, we are too slow. When this spirit first dawned, probably it might have been easily checked; but it is scarcely within the reach of human ken, at this moment, to say when, where, or how it will terminate. There are combustibles in every State, which a spark might set fire to. In this a perfect calm prevails at present; and a prompt disposition to support and give energy to the federal system is discovered, if the unlucky stirring of the dispute respecting the navigation of the Mississippi does not become a leaven that will ferment and sour the mind of it.

The resolutions of the present session respecting a paper emission, military certificates, &c., have stamped justice and liberality on the proceedings of the Assembly. By a late act, it seems very desirous of a general convention to revise and amend the federal constitution. *Apropos;* what prevented the eastern States from attending the September meeting at Annapolis?

Of all the States in the Union it should have seemed to me, that a measure of this sort, (distracted as they were with internal commotions and experiencing the want of energy in the government,) would have been most pleasing to them. What are the prevailing sentiments of the one now proposed to be held in Philadelphia in May next? and how will it be attended? You are at the fountain of intelligence, where the wisdom of the nation, it is to be presumed, is concentred; consequently better able, (as I have had sufficient experience of your intelligence, confidence, and candor,) to solve these questions.

The Maryland Assembly has been violently agitated by the question for a paper emission. It has been carried in the House of Delegates; but what has been or may be the fate of the bill in the Senate, I have not yet heard. The partisans in favor of the measure in the lower House threaten, *it is said*, a secession, if it is rejected by that branch of the legislature. Thus are we advancing. In regretting, which I have often done with the keenest sorrow, the death of our much lamented friend General Greene, I have accompanied it of late with a query, whether he would not have preferred such an exit to the scenes, which, it is more than probable, many of his compatriots may live to bemoan.

In both your letters you intimate, that the men of reflection, principle, and property in New England, feeling the inefficacy of their present government, are contemplating a change; but you are not explicit with respect to its nature. It has been supposed,

that the constitution of the State of Massachusetts was amongst the most energetic in the Union. May not these disorders then be ascribed to an indulgent exercise of the powers of administration? If your laws authorized, and your powers are equal to the suppression of these tumults in the first instance, delay and unnecessary expedients were improper. These are rarely well applied; and the same causes would produce similar effects in any form of government, if the powers of it are not exercised. I ask this question for information. I know nothing of the facts.

That Great Britain will be an unconcerned spectator of the present insurrections, if they continue, is not to be expected. That she is at this moment sowing the seeds of jealousy and discontent among the various tribes of Indians on our frontiers, admits of no doubt in my mind; and that she will improve every opportunity to foment the spirit of turbulence within the bowels of the United States, with a view of distracting our governments and promoting divisions, is with me not less certain. Her first manœuvres in this will no doubt be covert, and may remain so till the period shall arrive when a decided line of conduct may avail her. Charges of violating the treaty, and other pretexts, will then not be wanting to color overt acts, tending to effect the great objects of which she has long been in labor. A man is now at the head of their American affairs, well calculated to conduct measures of this kind, and more than probably was selected for the purpose. We ought not therefore to sleep nor to slumber. Vigilance in watching and vigor

in acting is become in my opinion indispensably necessary. If the powers are inadequate, amend or alter them; but do not let us sink into the lowest state of humiliation and contempt, and become a by-word in all the earth. I think with you, that the spring will unfold important and distressing scenes, unless much wisdom and good management is displayed in the interim. Adieu. Be assured no man has a higher esteem and regard for you, than I have; none more sincerely your friend.

P. S. Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for you and Mrs. Knox and in compliments of congratulation on the late addition to your family.

TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 January, 1787.

MY DEAR BUSHROD,

I condole most sincerely with you, my sister & family, on the death of my Brother[1]: I feel most sensibly for this event; but resignation being our duty—to attempt an expression of my sorrow on this occasion would be as feebly described, as it would be unavailing when related.

If there are any occasional services which I can render my sister or any of you, I shall have great pleasure in the execution; if I could discharge the duties of an Executor, I would undertake the trust most cheerfully; but in truth I am not in a situation to do this. Already I am so much involved in and

[1] John Augustine Washington.

so perplexed with other people's affairs, that my own are very much unattended to. Happily, there is not the least occasion of my assistance in the administration of your deceased Father's Estate. Your competency alone is sufficient for this purpose—when joined by that of my Sister, and your brother, the task will be easy. It may be an alleviating circumstance of my brother's death, that his affairs fall into such good hands, and that each of you have dispositions and capability to do what is proper. * * *

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 3 February, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I feel myself exceedingly obliged to you for the full and friendly communications in your letters of the 14th, 21st, and 25th ultimo, and shall (critically as matters are described in the letter) be exceedingly anxious to know the issue of the movements of the forces, that were assembling in support of, and in opposition to, the constitution of Massachusetts. The moment is important. If government shrinks, or is unable to enforce its laws, fresh manœuvres will be displayed by the insurgents, anarchy and confusion must prevail, and every thing will be turned topsy-turvy in that State, where it is not probable it will end.[1]

[1] "On the prospect of the happy termination of this insurrection I sincerely congratulate you, hoping that good may result from the cloud of evils, which threatened not only the hemisphere of Massachusetts, but by spreading its baneful influence threatened the tranquillity of other States. Surely Shays must be

In your letter of the 14th you express a wish to be informed of my intention, respecting the convention proposed to be held in Philadelphia May next. *In confidence* I inform you, that it is not, at this time, my intention to attend it. When this matter was first moved in the Assembly of this State, some of the principal characters of it wrote to me, requesting they might be permitted to put my name in the delegation. To this I objected. They again pressed, and I again refused, assigning among other reasons my having declined meeting the Society of the Cincinnati at that place about the same time, and that I thought it would be disrespectful to that body, to whom I owe much, to be there on any other occasion. Notwithstanding these intimations, my name was inserted in the act; and an official communication thereof made by the executive to me, to whom, at the same time that I expressed my sense for the confidence reposed in me, I declared that, as I saw no prospect of my attending, it was my wish that my name might not remain in the delegation to the exclusion of another. To this I have been requested in emphatical terms not to decide absolutely, as no inconvenience would result from the new appointment of another, at least for some time yet.

either a weak man, the dupe of some characters that are yet behind the curtain, or has been deceived by his followers; or, which may be as likely as any thing perhaps, he did not conceive that there was energy enough in the government to bring matters to the crisis they have been pushed. It is to be hoped the General Court of that State concurred in the report of the committee, that a rebellion actually existed. This would be decisive, and the most likely means of putting the finishing stroke to the business."—*Washington to Knox*, 25 February, 1787.

Thus the matter stands, which is the reason of my saying to you *in confidence*, that at present I retain my first intention not to go. In the mean while, as I have the fullest conviction of your friendship for and attachment to me, know your abilities to judge, and your means of information, I shall receive any communications from you on this subject with thankfulness. My first wish is to do for the best, and to act with propriety. You know me too well to believe, that reserve or concealment of any opinion or circumstance would be at all agreeable to me. The legality of this convention I do not mean to discuss, nor how problematical the issue of it may be. That powers are wanting none can deny. Through what medium they are to be derived will, like other matters, engage the attention of the wise. That, which takes the shortest course to obtain them, in my opinion will, under present circumstances, be found best; otherwise, like a house on fire, whilst the most regular mode of extinguishing the flames is contended for, the building is reduced to ashes. My opinion of the energetic wants of the federal government are well known. My public annunciations and private declarations have uniformly expressed these sentiments; and, however constitutional it may be for Congress to point out the defects of the federal system, I am strongly inclined to believe, that it would not be found the most efficacious channel for the recommendations, more especially the alterations, to flow, for reasons too obvious to enumerate.[1]

[1] To Mr. Jay he wrote, touching upon the same subject, more than a month later: "I would fain try what the wisdom of the proposed convention will

The system on which you seem disposed to build a national government, is certainly more energetic, and I dare say in every point of view more desirable than the present, which from experience we find is not only slow, debilitated, and liable to be thwarted by every breath, but is defective in that secrecy, which, for the accomplishment of many of the most important national objects, is indispensably necessary; and besides, having the legislative, executive, and judiciary departments concentred, is exceptionable. But, at the same time that I gave this opinion, I believe the political machine will yet be much tumbled and tossed, and possibly be wrecked altogether, before that or any thing like it will be adopted. The darling sovereignties of each State, the governors elected and elect, the legislators, with a long tribe of et ceteras, whose political importance will be lessened, if not annihilated, would give their weight of opposition to such a revolution; but I may be speaking without book; for, scarcely ever going off my own farms, I see few people, who do not call upon me, and am very little acquainted with the sentiments of the great public. Indeed, after what I have seen, or rather after what I have heard, I shall be surprised at nothing; for, if three years since any person had told me, that there would have been such a formidable rebellion as

suggest, and what can be effected by their counsels. It may be the last peaceable mode of essaying the practicability of the present form, without a greater lapse of time, than the exigency of our affairs will allow. In strict propriety, a convention so holden may not be legal. Congress, however, may give it a coloring by recommendation, which would fit it more to the taste, without proceeding to a definition of the powers. This, however constitutionally it might be done, would not in my opinion be expedient."—March 10th.

exists at this day against the laws and constitution of our own making, I should have thought him a bedlamite, a fit subject for a mad-house. Adieu. You know how much, and how sincerely I am your ever affectionate and most obedient servant.

TO CHARLES WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 14 February, 1787.

DEAR CHARLES,

When the enclosed was written, I knew nothing of George's[1] intention of visiting Berkeley. The safe conveyance afforded by him, is very favorable, and [I] gladly embraced it.

Having seen Bushrod and Corbin Washington on their way from Berkeley, their information is the subject of this letter and is exceedingly distressing to me, inasmuch as I have not the means of affording immediate relief. By them I learn that the remaining negros of my deceased Brother Samuel's Estate are under an execution, and a momentary sale of them may be expected, and this too by the extraordinary conduct of Mr. White in applying moneys received towards the discharge of a Bond *not in suit*, when they ought to have given it in payment of Mr. Alexander's claim, on which judgment had been, or was on the point of being obtained. How in the name of Heaven came Mr. White to be vested with powers to dispose of the money he should recover, unaccom-

[1] George Augustine Washington.

panied with instructions respecting the disposal; Will not Mr. Alexander when he sees every exertion making to pay him have mercy on the orphan? Can he as a Father and man of feeling see the Fatherless reduced from Competency to distress untouched? If there was an unwillingness to pay him, if property had not been sold for the express purpose of doing it, and if there was not a prospect of [its] being done in a very short time, it would be right in Mr. Alexander to push matters to extremity; but when (as I am informed) in the case every exertion is making to satisfy him, to cause perhaps three pounds worth of property to be sold to raise 20/ cash, this would be inconsistent with that benevolence which should be characteristic of every man and to which, from what I have heard of the Gentleman, he is justly intitled. I therefore think as Executor to the will and guardian to the boys, you should before the dye is cast apply by fair and candid representation to Mr. Alexander on this subject, not in the cold mode of letter, but personally, to see if this evil cannot be averted. Vain would it be for me to offer Mr. Alexander any assurances of the money at a short given day. I cannot get it from those who owe me without suit, and I hate to sue them. I have offered lands for sale at very moderate prices, but have not been able to sell them. Otherwise, or if I could raise the money by any other means, I would relieve my nephews without hesitation from the impending evil. Indeed, I would essay any thing to save the estate; for if the negros are sold for ready money, they will go for a

song. To add aught to this is unnecessary. With the most affectionate regards.

My love, in which Mrs. Washington joins, to my sister and the family.

TO MRS. MARY WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 15 February, 1787.

HOND. MADAM,

In consequence of your communication to George Washington, of your want of money, I take the (first safe) conveyance by Mr. John Dandridge to send you 15 guineas, which believe me is all I have, and which indeed ought to have been paid many days ago to another, agreeable to my own assurances. I have now demands upon me for more than 500£, three hundred and forty odd of which is due for the tax of 1786; and I know not where or when, I shall receive one shilling with which to pay it. In the last two years I made no crops. In the first I was obliged to buy corn and this year have none to sell, and my wheat is so bad, I cannot neither eat it myself nor sell it to others, and Tobacco I make none. Those who owe me money cannot or will not pay it without suits, and to sue is to do nothing; whilst my expences, not from any extravagance, or an inclination on my part to live splendidly, but for the absolute support of my family and the visitors who are constantly here, are exceedingly high; higher indeed than I can support without selling part of my estate, which I am disposed to do, rather than run in debt, or continue to be

so; but this I cannot do, without taking much less than the lands I have offered for sale are worth. This is really and truely my situation. I do not however offer it as any excuse for not paying you what may really be due; for let this be little or much, I am willing, however unable, to pay to the utmost farthing; but it is really hard upon me when you have taken every thing you wanted from the Plantation by which money could be raised, when I have not received one farthing, directly nor indirectly from the place for more than twelve years, if ever, and when, in that time I have paid, as appears by Mr. Lund Washington's accounts against me (during my absence) Two hundred and sixty odd pounds, and by my own account Fifty odd pounds out of my own Pocket to you, besides (if I am rightly informed) every thing that has been raised by the Crops on the Plantation. Who to blame, or whether any body is to blame for these things I know not, but these are facts; and as the purposes for which I took the Estate are not answered, nor likely to be so, but dissatisfaction on all sides have taken place, I do not mean to have any thing more to say to your Plantation or negros since the first of January, except the fellow who is here, and who will not, as he has formed connections in this neighborhood, leave it. As experience has proved him, I will hire. Of this my intention, I informed my brother John sometime ago, whose death I sincerely lament on many accounts, and on this painful event condole with you most sincerely. I do not mean by this declaration to withhold any aid or support I can

give from you; for whilst I have a shilling left, you shall have part, if it is wanted, whatever my own distresses may be. What I shall then give, I shall have credit for; now I have not, for tho' I have received nothing from your Quarter, and am told that every farthing goes to you, and have moreover paid between 3 and 4 hundred pounds besides out of my own pocket, I am viewed as a delinquent, and consid-sidered perhaps by the world as [an] unjust and undutiful son. My advice to you, therefore, is to do one of two things with the Plantation. Either let your grandson Bushrod Washington, to whom the land is given by his Father, have the whole interest there, that is, lands and negros, at a reasonable rent; or, next year (for I presume it is too late this, as the overseer may be engaged) to let him have the land at a certain yearly rent during your life; and hire out the negros. This would ease you of all care and trouble, make your income certain, and your support ample. Further, my sincere and pressing advice to you is, to break up housekeeping, hire out all the rest of your servants except a man and a maid, and live with one of your children. This would relieve you entirely from the cares of this world, and leave your mind at ease to reflect undisturbedly on that which ought to come. On this subject I have been full with my Brother John, and it was determined he should endeavor to get you to live with him. He alas is no more, and three, only of us remain. My house is at your service, and [I] would press you most sincerely and most devoutly to accept it, but I

am sure, and candor requires me to say, it will never answer your purposes in any shape whatsoever. For in truth it may be compared to a well resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers who are going from north to south, or from south to north, do not spend a day or two at it. This would, were you to be an inhabitant of it, oblige you to do one of 3 things: 1st, to be always dressing to appear in company; 2d, to come into [the room] in a dishabille, or 3d, to be as it were a prisoner in your own chamber. The first you'ld not like; indeed, for a person at your time of life it would be too fatiguing. The 2d, I should not like, because those who resort here are, as I observed before, strangers and people of the first distinction. And the 3d, more than probably, would not be pleasing to either of us. Nor indeed could you be retired in any room in my house; for what with the sitting up of company, the noise and bustle of servants, and many other things, you would not be able to enjoy that calmness and serenity of mind, which in my opinion you ought now to prefer to every other consideration in life. If you incline to follow this advice, the House and lots on which you now live you may rent, and enjoy the benefit of the money arising therefrom as long as you live. This with the rent of the land at the Little Falls, and the hire of your negros, would bring you in an income which would be much more than sufficient to answer all your wants and make ample amends to the child you live with; for myself I should desire nothing; if it did not, I would most cheerfully contribute more. A man, a maid, the phaeton and

two horses, are all you would want. To lay in a sufficiency for the support of these would not require ¼ of your income, the rest would purchase every necessary you could possibly want, and place it in your power to be serviceable to those with whom you may live, which no doubt would be agreeable to all parties.

There are such powerful reasons in my mind for giving this advice that I cannot help urging it with a degree of earnestness which is uncommon for me to do. It is, I am convinced, the only means by which you can be happy. The cares of a family, without any body to assist you; the charge of an estate the profits of which depend upon wind, weather, a good overseer, an honest man, and a thousand other circumstances, cannot be right or proper at your advanced age, and for me, who am absolutely prevented from attending to my own plantations, which are almost within call of me, to attempt the care of yours, would be folly in the extreme; but [by] the mode I have pointed out, you may reduce your income to a certainty, be eased of all trouble, and if you are so disposed, may be perfectly happy; for happiness depends more upon the internal frame of a person's own mind, than on the externals in the world. Of the last, if you will pursue the plan here recommended, I am sure you can want nothing that is essential. The other depends wholly upon yourself, for the riches of the Indies cannot purchase it.

Mrs. Washington, George and Fanny join me in every good wish for you, and I am, honored madame, your most dutiful and aff. son.

TO THOMAS STONE.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, 16 February, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 30th ultimo came duly to hand. To give an opinion in a cause of so much importance as that, which has warmly agitated two branches of your legislature, and which, from the appeal that is made, is likely to create great and perhaps dangerous divisions, is rather a delicate matter; but, as this diversity of opinion is on a subject, which has, I believe, occupied the minds of most men, and as my sentiments thereon have been fully and decidedly expressed long before the Assembly either of Maryland or this State were convened, I do not scruple to declare, that, if I had a voice in your legislature, it would have been given decidedly against a paper emission upon the general principles of its utility as a representative, and the necessity of it as a medium.[2]

[1] Member of the Senate of Maryland.

[2] A law had been proposed in the legislature of Maryland, which had passed the House of Delegates, for issuing bills of credit to the amount of three hundred and fifty thousand pounds, to be loaned by the State in various sums, the whole redeemable in ten years, and drawing interest at six per cent., payable annually. The Senate unanimously refused their assent to this proposition; and the differences between the two bodies rose to such a height that the former resolved to adjourn for two months, and refer the subject to the people. This was deemed a very objectionable course by the Senate, inasmuch as it was designed to coerce them to act against their judgment, and thus deprive them of the freedom and independence which it was a special object of the constitution to secure to that branch of the legislature.

The objections to this paper emission did not rest wholly on the ground of the inexpediency of a paper currency as such, but were derived in part from the peculiar circumstances of the time. It was necessary for each State in the confederacy to pay a large portion of the annual requisitions of Congress in specie, by which alone the large demands for discharging the interest of the national debt could be answered. This specie must be collected from the

And as far as I have been able to understand its advocates (for the two papers you sent me were the same, and contained no reasons of the House of Delegates for the local want of it in your State, though I have seen and given them a cursory reading elsewhere) I should have been very little less opposed to it.

To assign reasons for this opinion would be as unnecessary as tedious. The ground has been so often trod, that a place hardly remains untouched. But in a word, the necessity arising from a want of specie is represented as greater than it really is. I contend, that it is by the substance, not with the shadow of a thing, we are to be benefitted. The wisdom of man, in my humble opinion, cannot at this time devise a plan, by which the credit of paper money would be long supported; consequently depreciation keeps pace with the quantity of the emission, and articles, for which it is exchanged, rise in a greater ratio than the sinking value of the money. Wherein, then, is the farmer, the planter, the artisan benefitted? The debtor may

people by taxation, an end which would be rather frustrated than promoted by a local paper currency issued on the credit of an individual State, especially as the country was already flooded with paper securities that had been rendered indispensable during the war. If a State issued paper, it could be disposed of only by loans on bonds or mortgages; and this paper must be received for taxes, or it would immediately depreciate, and create new embarrassments. But if a State should take its own paper for taxes, where was the specie to be found for paying its quota to the national government? This paper money must necessarily be exchanged for specie, before it could be made available for that object. So far from increasing the quantity of metallic currency, the effect of a surplusage of paper would be to diminish it; and hence the State would be obliged to go abroad to procure it, for the purpose of liquidating the claims of Congress, and to obtain it through a disadvantageous negotiation of its own paper. Such was the view taken by the opponents to the measure.—*Sparks.*

be, because, as I have observed, he gives the shadow in lieu of the substance ; and, in proportion to his gain, the creditor or the body politic suffer. Whether it be a legal tender or not, it will, as hath been observed very truly, leave no alternative. It must be that or nothing. An evil equally great is, the door it immediately opens for speculation, by which the least designing, and perhaps most valuable, part of the community are preyed upon by the more knowing and crafty speculators.

But, contrary to my intention and declaration, I am offering reasons in support of my opinion ; reasons too, which of all others are least pleasing to the advocates for paper money. I shall therefore only observe generally, that so many people have suffered by former emissions, that, like a burnt child who dreads the fire, no person will touch it who can possibly avoid it. The natural consequence of which will be, that the specie, which remains unexported, will be instantly locked up. With great esteem and regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO COLONEL DAVID HUMPHREYS.

MOUNT VERNON, 8 March, 1787.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

Colo. Wadsworth, as I informed you in my last, presented me your obliging favor of the 20th of January and the Post since has handed me the subsequent one of the 11th ulto.

My sentiments respecting the inexpediency of my attending the proposed convention of the States in

Philadelphia remain the same as when I wrote you last, tho' Congress I am informed are about to remove one of the objections by their recommendation of this Convention. I am still indirectly and delicately pressed by many to attend this meeting; and a thought has run thro' my mind of late attended with more embarrassment than any former one. It is whether my not doing it will not be considered as an implied dereliction to Republicanism—nay more, whether (however injurious the imputation) it may not be ascribed to other motives. My wish is I confess to see this Convention tied [tried?]; after which, if the present form is not made efficient, conviction of the propriety of a change will pervade all ranks, and many [may] be effected by peace. Till then, however necessary it may appear to the more discerning part of the community, my opinion is, that it cannot be accomplished without great contention and much confusion for reasons too obvious to enumerate. It is one of the evils, perhaps not the smallest, of democratical governments that they must feel before they will see or act under this view of matters, and not doubting but you have heard the sentiments of many respectable characters since the date of your letter of the 20th of January on this subject, and perhaps since the business has been moved in Congress of the propriety or impropriety of my attendance, let me pray you, my dear Sir, to give me confidentially the public opinion and expectation as far as it has come to your knowledge of what it is supposed, I will or ought to do on this occasion. You will readily see

the necessity of my receiving it soon, if it is to have an operation contrary to the former, because my communications to the executive of this State are not considered as definitive, I must make these so shortly. * * *[1]

[1] A letter of similar import, written to Knox, is printed in Sparks.

In an early letter General Knox had spoken somewhat doubtingly; but after Congress had sanctioned the meeting of a convention, and recommended it to the States, his impressions seem to have become decided. "You will have observed," said he, "that Congress has passed an act approving the idea of a convention, so worded as to include all appointments already made. This circumstance will remove all objections to the convention on account of its legality."—February 27th. In reply to the above letter he spoke more fully and more directly to the point:

"As you have thought proper, my dear Sir, to request my opinion respecting your attendance at the convention, I shall give it with the utmost sincerity and frankness. I imagine that your own satisfaction, or chagrin, and that of your friends, will depend entirely on the result of the convention. For I take it for granted, that, however reluctantly you may acquiesce, you will be constrained to accept of the president's chair. Hence the proceedings of the convention will more immediately be appropriated to you than to any other person. Were the convention to propose only amendments and patchwork to the present defective confederation, your reputation would in a degree suffer. But, were an energetic and judicious system to be proposed with your signature, it would be a circumstance highly honorable to your fame, in the judgment of the present and future ages; and doubly entitle you to the glorious republican epithet, *The Father of your Country.*

"But, the men generally chosen being of the first information, great reliance may be placed on the wisdom and vigor of their counsels and judgment, and therefore the balance of my opinion preponderates greatly in favor of your attendance. I am persuaded, that your name has had already great influence to induce the States to come into the measure, that your attendance will be grateful, that your presence would confer on the assembly a national complexion, and that it would more than any other circumstance induce a compliance with the propositions of the convention."—March 19th.

The following are extracts from letters written by Colonel Humphreys on the same subject.

"I may then with justice assert, that, so far from having seen any reason to change my opinion respecting the inexpediency of your attending the convention in May next, additional arguments have occurred to confirm me in the sentiment. What chance is there then, that entire unanimity will prevail?

TO JOHN JAY.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 March, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I stand indebted to you for two letters. The first, introductory of Mr. Anstey, needed no apology, nor will any be necessary on future similar occasions. The other of the 17th of January is on a very interesting subject deserving very particular attention.

How far the revision of the federal system, and giving more adequate powers to Congress may be productive of an efficient government, I will not under my present view of the matter, presume to decide.—That many inconveniences result from the

Should this be the fact, however, would not the several members as it were pledge themselves for the execution of their system? And would not this inevitably launch you again on a sea of politics? As you justly observe, matters must probably grow worse before they will be better. Since I had the honor of addressing you last on this subject, I have been in the way of hearing the speculations of many different characters on the proposed convention, and their conjectures on the part you would act in consequence of your appointment to it. I have heard few express any sanguine expectations concerning the successful issue of the meeting, and I think not one has judged it eligible for you to attend. In this part of the Union, your not attending will not be considered either by the federal or anti-federal party as a dereliction of republicanism. The former believe it unimportant, or perhaps injurious to the national interests, for you to come forward at present; the latter look upon the convention as rather intended to subvert than support republicanism, and will readily excuse your non-attendance."—New Haven, March 24th.

Again: "I mentioned in my last that I had not conversed with a single character of consideration, who judged it proper for you to attend the convention. I have now seen several, who think it highly interesting that you should be there. Gouverneur Morris and some others have wished me to use whatever influence I might have to induce you to come. I could not have promised this without counteracting my own judgment. I will not, however, hesitate to say, that I do not conceive your attendance can hazard such personal ill consequences, as were to be apprehended before the proposed meeting had been legitimated by the sanction of Congress."—Fairfield, April 9th.

present form, none can deny. Those enumerated in your letter are so obvious and sensibly felt that no logic can controvert, nor is it likely that any change of conduct will remove them, and that attempts to alter or amend it will be like the proppings of a house which is ready to fall, and which no shoars can support (as many seem to think) may also be true. But, is the public mind matured for such an important change as the one you have suggested? What would be the consequences of a premature attempt? My opinion is, that this Country must yet feel and see more, before it can be accomplished.

A thirst for power, and the bantling, I had liked to have said monster for sovereignty, which have taken such fast hold of the States individually, will when joined by the many whose personal consequence in the control of State politics will in a manner be annihilated, form a strong phalanx against it; and when to these the few who can hold posts of honor or profit in the national government, are compared with the many who will see but little prospect of being noticed, and the discontent of others who may look for appointments, the opposition will be altogether irresistable till the mass, as well as the more discerning part of the Community shall see the necessity. Among men of reflection, few will be found I believe, who are not beginning to think that our system is more perfect in theory than in practice; and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America it is more than probable we shall exhibit the last melancholy proof, that mankind are not competent to their

own government without the means of coercion in the sovereign.

Yet I would fain try what the wisdom of the proposed convention will suggest: and what can be effected by their councils. It may be the last peaceable mode of essaying the practicability of the present form, without a greater lapse of time than the exigency of our affairs will allow. In strict propriety a convention so holden may not be legal. Congress, however, may give it a coloring by recommendation, which would fit it more to the taste without proceeding to a definition of the powers. This, however constitutionally it might be done, would not, in my opinion, be expedient: for delicacy on the one hand, and jealousy on the other, would produce a mere nihil.

My name is in the delegation to this Convention; but it was put there contrary to my desire, and remains contrary to my request. Several reasons at the time of this appointment and which yet exist, conspired to make an attendance inconvenient, perhaps improper, tho' a good deal urged to it. With sentiments of great regard and friendship, &c.

P. S. Since writing this letter I have seen the resolution of Congress recommendatory of the Convention to be holden in Philadelphia the 2d Monday in May.[1]

[1] . . . "However desirous I am, and always shall be, to comply with any commands of my Country, I do not conceive that I can attend the proposed Convention to be holden in Philadelphia in May next, with any degree of consistent conduct. For besides the declaration which I made in a very solemn manner when I was about to retire, of bidding adieu to all public employment,

TO MAJOR-GENERAL BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 23 March, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

Ever since the disorders in your State began to grow serious I have been peculiarly anxious to hear from that quarter; General Knox has from time to time transmitted to me the state of affairs as they came to his hands; but nothing has given such full and satisfactory information as the particular detail of events which you have been so good as to favor me with, and for which you will please to accept my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. Permit me also, my dear Sir, to offer you my sincerest congratulations upon your success. The suppression of those tumults and insurrections with so little bloodshed, is an event as happy as it was unexpected; it must have been peculiarly agreeable to you, being placed in so delicate and critical a situation. I am extremely happy to find that your sentiments upon the disfranchising act are such as they are; upon my first seeing it, I formed an opinion perfectly coincident with yours, vizt., that measures more generally lenient might have produced equally as good an effect without entirely alienating the affections of the peo-

I had just before my appointment as a delegate to this convention written and despatched circular letters to the several State Societies of the Cincinnati, informing them of my intention not to attend the general meeting,—which was to take place about the same time and at the same place and assigned reasons which apply as forcibly in the one case as the other. To attend the Convention under these circumstances might be construed disrespect to a worthier set of men for whose attachment and support on many trying occasions, I shall ever put the highest gratitude and affection."—*Washington to Madison*, 15 March, 1787.

ple from the government; as it now stands, it affects a large body of men, some of them, perhaps, it deprives of the means of gaining a livelihood; the friends and connections of those people will feel themselves wounded in a degree, and I think it will rob the State of a number of its inhabitants, if it produces nothing more. * * *

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 March, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 11th did not come to my hand till the 24th, and since then till now I have been too much indisposed to acknowledge the receipt of it.[1]

To what cause to ascribe the detention of the letter I know not as I never omit sending once and often twice a week to the post office in Alexandria. It was the decided intention of the letter I had the honor of writing to your Excellency the 21st of December last to inform you, that it was not convenient for me to attend the convention proposed to be holden at Philadelphia in May next; and I had entertained hopes, that another had been, or soon would be,

[1] *From Governor Randolph's Letter.*—"I must call upon your friendship to excuse me for again mentioning the convention at Philadelphia. Your determination having been fixed on a thorough review of your situation, I feel like an intruder when I again hint a wish, that you would join the delegation. But every day brings forth some new crisis, and the confederation is, I fear, the last anchor of our hope. Congress have taken up the subject, and appointed the second Monday in May next, as the day of meeting. Indeed, from my private correspondence, I doubt whether the existence of that body, even through this year, may not be questionable under our present circumstances."—Richmond, March 11th.

appointed in my place, inasmuch as it is not only inconvenient for me to leave home, but because there will be, I apprehend, too much cause to arraign my conduct with inconsistency in again appearing on a public theatre, after a public declaration to the contrary, and because it will, I fear, have a tendency to sweep me back into the tide of public affairs, when retirement and ease is so essentially necessary for and is so much desired by me.

However, as my friends, with a degree of solicitude which is unusual, seem to wish for my attendance on this occasion, I have come to a resolution to go, if my health will permit, provided from the lapse of time between the date of your Excellency's letter and this reply the executive may not (the reverse of which would be highly pleasing to me) have turned their thoughts to some other character; for, independently of all other considerations, I have of late been so much afflicted with a rheumatic complaint in my shoulder that at times I am hardly able to raise my hand to my head, or turn myself in bed. This consequently might prevent my attendance, and eventually a representation of the State, which would afflict me more sensibly than the disorder that occasioned it.

If, after the expression of these sentiments, the executive should consider me as one of the delegates, I would thank your Excellency for the earliest advice of it; because, if I am able and should go to Philadelphia, I shall have some previous arrangement to make, and would set off for that place the 1st or 2d of May, that I might be there in time to account

personally for my conduct to the general meeting of the Cincinnati, which is to convene the first Monday of that month. My feelings would be much hurt, if that body should otherwise ascribe my attending the one and not the other occasion to a disrespectful inattention to the Society, when the fact is, that I shall ever retain the most lively and affectionate regard for the members of which it is composed, on account of their attachment to me and uniform support upon many trying occasions, as well as on account of their public virtues, patriotism, and sufferings.

I hope your Excellency will be found among the *attending* delegates. I should be glad to be informed who the others are; and cannot conclude without once more and in emphatical terms praying, that, if there is not a *decided* representation in *prospect* without me, another may be chosen in my room without ceremony and without delay, for the reason already assigned. For it would be unfortunate, indeed, if the State, which was the mover of this convention, should be unrepresented in it. With great respect, I have the honor to be your Excellency's most obedient servant.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, 31 March, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

At the same time that I acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favor of the 21st ultimo from New York, I promise to avail myself of your indulgence

[1] Mr. Madison had taken his seat in Congress as a delegate from Virginia on the 12th of February.

to write only when it is convenient to me. If this should not occasion a relaxation on your part, I shall become very much your debtor, and possibly, like others in similar circumstances, (when the debt is burthensome,) may feel a disposition to apply the sponge, or, what is nearly akin to it, pay you off in depreciated paper, which, being a legal tender, or, what is tantamount, being *that* or *nothing*, you cannot refuse. You will receive the nominal value, and that you know quiets the conscience, and makes all things easy with the debtor.

I am glad to find that Congress have recommended to the States to appear in the convention proposed to be holden in Philadelphia next May. I think the reasons in favor have the preponderancy over those against it. It is idle in my opinion to suppose that the Sovereign can be insensible to the inadequacy of the powers under which they act, and that, seeing it, they should not recommend a revision of the federal system; especially when it is considered by many as the only constitutional mode by which the defects can be remedied. Had Congress proceeded to a delineation of the powers, it might have sounded an alarm; but, as the case is, I do not conceive that it will have that effect.[1]

From the acknowledged abilities of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I have no doubt of his having

[1] The commissioners, who had met at Annapolis in September, 1786, sent a letter to Congress, accompanied by their address to the several States, proposing a convention at Philadelphia on the second Monday of May. These papers were taken up by Congress, and referred to a committee, consisting of one member from each State, who reported in favor of recommending to the several legislatures to send delegates.

ably investigated the infractions of the treaty on both sides. Much is it to be regretted, however, that there should have been any on ours. We seem to have forgot, or never to have learnt, the policy of placing one's enemy in the wrong. Had we observed good faith on our part, we might have told our tale to the world with a good grace, but complaints illy become those who are found to be the first aggressors.

I am fully of opinion that those, who lean to a monarchical government, have either not consulted the public mind, or that they live in a region, which (the levelling principles in which they were bred being entirely eradicated) is much more productive of monarchical ideas, than are to be found in the southern States, where, from the habitual distinctions which have always existed among the people, one would have expected the first generation and the most rapid growth of them. I am also clear, that, even admitting the utility, nay, necessity of the form, yet that the period is not arrived for adopting the change without shaking the peace of this country to its foundation. That a thorough reform of the present system is indispensable, none, who have capacities to judge, will deny; and with hand [and heart] I hope the business will be essayed in a full convention. After which, if more powers and more decision is not found in the existing form, if it still wants energy and that secrecy and despatch (either from the non-attendance or the local views of its members), which is characteristic of good government, and if it shall be found (the contrary of which, however, I have

always been more afraid of than of the abuse of them), that Congress will, upon all proper occasions, exert the powers which are given, with a firm and steady hand, instead of frittering them back to the States, where the members, in place of viewing themselves in their national character, are too apt to be looking, —I say, after this essay is made, if the system proves inefficient, conviction of the necessity of a change will be disseminated among all classes of the people. Then, and not till then, in my opinion, can it be attempted without involving all the evils of civil discord.

I confess, however, that my opinion of public virtue is so far changed, that I have my doubts whether any system, without the means of coercion in the sovereign, will enforce due obedience to the ordinances of a general government ; without which every thing else fails. Laws or ordinances unobserved, or partially attended to, had better never have been made ; because the first is a mere nihil, and the second is productive of much jealousy and discontent. But what kind of coercion, you may ask. This indeed will require thought, though the non-compliance of the States with the late requisition is an evidence of the necessity. It is somewhat singular that a State (New York), which used to be foremost in all federal measures, should now turn her face against them in almost every instance.

I fear the State of Massachusetts has exceeded the bounds of good policy in its disfranchisements. Punishment is certainly due to the disturbers of a government, but the operation of this act is too extensive.

It embraces too much, and probably will give birth to new instead of destroying the old leaven. Some acts passed at the last session of our Assembly, respecting the trade of this country, have given great and general discontent to the merchants. An application from the whole body of them at Norfolk to the governor has been made, it is said, to convene the Assembly.

I had written thus far, and was at the point of telling you how much I am your obliged servant, when your favor of the 18th ultimo calls upon me for additional acknowledgments. I thank you for the Indian vocabulary, which I dare say will be very acceptable in a general comparison. Having taken a copy, I return you the original with thanks.

It gives me great pleasure to hear, that there is a probability of a full representation of the States in convention; but if the delegates come to it under fetters, the salutary ends proposed will in my opinion be greatly embarrassed and retarded, if not altogether defeated. I am desirous of knowing how this matter is, as my wish is that the convention may adopt no temporizing expedients, but probe the defects of the constitution to the bottom, and provide a radical cure, whether they are agreed to or not. A conduct of this kind will stamp wisdom and dignity on their proceedings, and hold up a light which sooner or later will have its influence.[1]

[1] "It gives me pleasure to find by your letter, that there will be so full a representation from this State. If the case had been otherwise, I would in emphatical terms have urged again that, rather than depend upon my going,

I should feel pleasure, I confess, in hearing that Vermont is received into the Union upon terms agreeable to all parties. I took the liberty years ago to tell some of the first characters in the State of New York, that sooner or later it would come to this; that the longer it was delayed, the terms on their part would probably be more difficult; and that the general interest was suffering by the suspense in which the business was held, as the asylum which it afforded was a constant drain from the army, in place of an aid which it would have afforded; and lastly, considering the proximity of it to Canada, if they were not with us, they might become a sore thorn in our side, which I verily believe would have been the case if the war had continued. The western settlements, without good and wise management, may be equally troublesome.

With sentiments of sincere friendship, I am &c.

another might be chosen in my place; for, as a friend and in confidence, I declare to you, that my assent is given contrary to my judgment; because the act will, I apprehend, be considered as inconsistent with my public declaration, delivered in a solemn manner at an interesting era of my life, never more to intermeddle in public matters. This declaration not only stands on the files of Congress, but is I believe registered in almost all the gazettes and magazines that are published; and what adds to the embarrassment is, I had, previous to my appointment, informed by a circular letter the several State Societies of the Cincinnati of my intention to decline the presidency of that order, and excused myself from attending the next general meeting at Philadelphia on the first Monday in May; assigning reasons for so doing, which apply as well in the one case as in the other. Add to these, I very much fear that all the States will not appear in convention, and that some of them will come fettered so as to impede rather than accelerate the great object of their convening; which, under the peculiar circumstances of my case, would place me in a more disagreeable situation than any other member would stand in. As I have yielded, however, to what appeared to be the earnest wishes of my friends, I will hope for the best."—*Washington to Edmund Randolph*, 9 April, 1787.

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 2 April, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

The early attention, which you were so obliging as to pay to my letter of the 8th ultimo, is highly pleasing and flattering. Were you to continue to give me information on the same point, you would add to the favor; as I see or think I see reasons for and against my attendance in convention so near an equilibrium, as will cause me to determine upon either with diffidence. One of the reasons against it is a fear, that all the States will not be represented. As some of them appear to have been unwillingly drawn into the measure, their delegates will come with such fetters as will embarrass and perhaps render nugatory the whole proceeding. In either of these circumstances, that is, a partial representation or cramped powers, I should not like to be a sharer in the business. If the delegates assemble with such powers, as will enable the convention to probe the defects of the constitution to the bottom, and point out radical cures, it would be an honorable employment; but not otherwise. These are matters you may possibly come at by means of your acquaintance with the delegates in Congress, who undoubtedly know what powers are given by their respective States. You also can inform me what is the prevailing opinion, with respect to my attendance or non-attendance; and I would sincerely thank you for the confidential communication of it.

If I should attend the convention, I will be in Philadelphia previous to the meeting of the Cincin-

nati, where I shall hope and expect to meet you and some others of my particular friends the day before, in order that I may have a free and unreserved conference with you on the subject of it; for, I assure you, this is in my estimation a business of a delicate nature.

That the design of the institution was pure, I have not a particle of doubt; that it may be so still, is perhaps equally unquestionable. But is not the subsiding of the jealousies respecting it to be ascribed to the modifications, which took place at the last general meeting? Are not these rejected *in toto* by some of the State Societies, and partially acceded to by others? Has any State so far overcome its prejudices as to grant a charter? Will the modifications and alterations be insisted on in the next meeting, or given up? If the first, will it not occasion warmth and divisions? If the latter, and I should remain at the head of this order, in what light would my signature appear in recommendations having different tendencies? In what light will this versatility appear to the foreign members, who perhaps are acting agreeably to the recommendation?

These, and other matters which may be agitated, will, I fear, place me in a disagreeable situation, if I should attend the meeting; and were among the causes, which induced me to decline previously the honor of the presidency. Indeed my health is become very precarious. A rheumatic complaint which has followed me more than six months, is frequently so bad that it is sometimes with difficulty I can raise my hand to my head or turn myself in bed. This,

however smooth and agreeable other matters might be, might, almost in the moment of my departure, prevent my attendance on either occasion. I will not at present touch upon any other points of your letter, but will wish you to ponder on all these matters, and write to me as soon as you can.

With sentiments of the sincerest friendship, I am your most affectionate, &c.

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 27 April, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

After every consideration my judgment was able to give the subject, I had determined to yield to the wishes of many of my friends who seemed anxious for my attending the Convention which is proposed to be holden in Philadelphia the 2d Monday of May, and though so much afflicted with a Rheumatick complaint (of which I have not been entirely free for six months) as to be under the necessity of carrying my arm in a sling for the last ten days, I had fixed on Monday next for my departure, and had made every necessary arrangement for the purpose when (within this hour) I am called by an express, who assures me not a moment is to be lost, to see a mother and *only* sister (who are supposed to be in the agonies of death) expire[1]; and I am hastening to obey this

[1] His *Diary* states that he received the call between four and five o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. He set out the next morning about five o'clock, baited at Dumfries, and reached Fredericksburg before two o'clock, finding the two patients better than had been reported. He set out on his return on the morning of the 30th.

melancholy call after having just buried a Brother who was the intimate companion of my youth, and the friend of my ripened age.[1] This journey of mine then, 100 miles, in the disordered frame of my body, will, I am persuaded, unfit me for the intended trip to Philadelphia, and assuredly prevent my offering that tribute of respect to my compatriots in arms which results from affection and gratitude for their attachment to, and support of me, upon so many trying occasions.

For this purpose it was, as I had (tho' with a good deal of Reluctance) consented, from a conviction that our affairs were verging fast to ruin, to depart from the resolution I had taken of never more stepping out of the walks of private life, that I determined to shew my respect to the General Meeting of the Society by coming there the week before. As the latter is prevented, and the other, it is probable, will not take place, I send such papers as have occasionally come to my hands, and may require the inspection, and the consideration of the Cincinnati. An apology for the order in which they are sent is highly necessary, and my present situation is the best I can offer. To morrow I had set apart for the Inspection and arrangement of them, that such only as were fitting, might be laid before the Society; for unless I had time to go over them again with a person who understands the French language, I am not even certain that all of what I send may relate to the affairs of the Cincinnati, and certain I am that some are too per-

[1] John Augustine Washington.

sonal, the sending of which will not, I hope, be ascribed to improper motives, when the *only* one I had (as I am in the moment of my departure from home and uncertain of returning to it) is that nothing which has been referred to me, may be with held.— * * *

TO LUND WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 7 May, 1787.

* * * I need not tell you, because a moment's recurrence to your own accounts will evince the fact, that there is no source from which I derive more than a sufficiency for the daily calls of my family, except what flows from the collection of old debts, and scanty and precarious enough, God knows this is. My estate for the last 11 years has not been able to make both ends meet. I am encumbered now with the deficiency. I mention this for no other purpose than to shew that however willing, I am not able to pay debts unless I could sell land, which I have publicly advertised without finding bidders. * * *

DIARY DURING THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, MAY–SEPTEMBER, 1787.[1]

Monday 7th [MAY].—At home preparing for my journey to Philadelphia. * * *

Tuesday 8th.—The weather being squally with showers, I

[1] Two forms of this diary exist: the one is in the Library of Congress and has been printed in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, xi., 296; the other, in the Department of State, is made the basis for this version. I have not hesitated to use the notes given in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, and give such variations in the texts as seem necessary.

defer'd setting off till the morning. Mr. Chas. Lee came to dinner, but left it afterwards.

Wednesday 9th.—Crossed from Mt. Vernon to Mr. Digges a little after sunrise, and pursuing the rout by the way of Baltimore, dined at Mt. Rich'd Henderson's in Bladensb'g, and lodged at Majr. Snowden's, when feeling very severely a violent hd. ach & sick stomack I went to bed early.

Thursday 10th.—Very great appearances of rain in the morning & a little falling induced me, tho' well recovered, to wait till abt. 8 o'clock before I set off. At one o'clock I arrived at Baltimore, dined at the Fountain, & supped & lodged at Doctr. McHenry's. Slow rain in the evening.

Friday 11th.—Set off before breakfast, rid 12 miles to Sherretts for it, bated there and proceeded without halting (weather threatening) to the Ferry at Havre de Gras where I dined, but could not cross, the wind being turbulent & squally. Lodged here.

Saturday 12th.—With difficulty (on acct. of the wind), crossed the Susquehanna.—Breakfasted at the Ferry house on the East side. Dined at the head of Elk (Hollingsworth's Tavern) and lodged at Wilmington at O'Flin's. At the head of Elk I was overtaken by Mr. Francis Corbin, who took a seat in my carriage.

Sunday 13th.—About 8 o'clock,[1] Mr. Corbin and myself set out, and dined at Chester (Mrs. Withy), where I was met by the Genls. Mifflin (now Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly), Knox and Varnum; the Colonels Humphreys and Minges [Mentges]—and Majors Jackson and Nicholas, with whom I proceeded to Philadh. At Grays Ferry the City light horse, commanded by Colo. Miles, met me and escorted me in by the Artillery officers who stood arranged & saluted me as I passed. Alighted through a crowd at Mrs. House's,[2] but being again warmly and kindly pressed by Mr. & Mrs. Rob. Morris to lodge with them, I did so and had my baggage removed thither.

Waited on the President, Doctr. Franklin, as soon as I got to town. On my arrival the Bells were chimed.

[1] "Nine o'clock."

[2] Mrs. Mary House kept a boarding-house at the corner of Fifth and Market streets.—*Penn. Mag.*

Monday 14*th.*—This being the day appointed for the Convention to meet, such members as were in town assembled at the State Ho., but only two States being represented—viz. Virginia & Pensylvania, agreed to attend at the same place at 11 o'clock tomorrow.

Dined in a family way at Mr. Morris's.[1]

Tuesday 15*th.*—Repaired, at the hour appointed, to the State Ho., but no more states being represented than were yesterday (tho' several more members had come in,[2]) we agreed to meet again tomorrow. Govr. Randolph from Virginia came in today.

Dined with the Members to the Genl. Meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Wednesday 16*th.*—No more than two States being yet represented agreed till a quoram of them should be formed to alter the hour of meeting at the State House to one o'clock.[3]

Dined at the President, Doctr. Franklin's—and drank Tea, and spent the evening at Mr. Jno. Penn's.

Thursday 17*th.*—Mr. Rutledge, from Charleston, and Mr. Chs Pinkney, from Congress, having arrived, gave a representation to So. Carolina : and Colo. Mason getting in this Evening, placed all the Delegates from Virginia on the floor of Convention. Dined at Mr. Powell's [4] and dr'k Tea there.

Friday 18*th.*—The representation from New York appeared on the floor today.——

Dined at Gray's Ferry, and drank Tea at Mr. Morris's ; after which accompanied Mrs. and some other Ladies to hear a Mrs. O'Connell read (a charity affair). The lady being reduced in circumstances had had recourse to this expedient to obtain a little money—her performe. was tolerable, at the College Hall.[5]

---

[1] "and took tea there."

[3] From North Carolina, Delaware, and New Jersey.

[2] "Dr. McClurg, of Virginia, came in."

[4] Samuel Powel.

[5] "The lecture to be read this Evening is a continuance of the Dissertation on Eloquence, which commenced in the first course; at the conclusion of which Solima of the Poet Hamet, translated by Sir William Jones, will be delivered."—*Penn. Packet*, quoted in the *Penn. Mag.*

Saturday 19th.—No more states represented.[1]

Dined at Mr. [Jared] Ingersoll's, spent the evening at my lodgings, & retired to my room soon.

Sunday 20th.—Dined with Mr. & Mrs. Morris and other company at their farm (called the Hills) ; returned in the afternoon & drank Tea at Mr. Powell's

Monday 21st.—Delaware State was represented.

Dined and drank Tea at Mr. [William] Bingham's in great splendor.

Tuesday 22d.—The Representation from No. Carolina was compleated, which made a representation for five States.

Dined and drank Tea at Mr. Morris's.

Wednesday 23d.—No more States being represented, I rid to Genl. Mifflin's to breakfast. After which in company with him, Mr. Madison, Mr. Rutledge, and others, I crossed the Schuylkill above the Falls, visited Mr. Peters, Mr. Penn's seat, and Mr. Wm. Hamilton's.[2]

Dined at Mr. Chew's, with the wedding guests (Colo. [John Eager] Howard of Baltimore having married his daughter Peggy) drank Tea there in a very large circle of ladies.

Thursday 24th.—No more States represented. Dined and Drank Tea at Mr. John Ross's. One of my Postilion boys (Paris) being sick, requested Doctr. [John] Jones to attend him.

Friday 25th.—Another Delegate coming in from the State of New Jersey, gave it a representation, and encreased the number to Seven, which forming a quoram of the 13, the members present resolved to organize the body ; when by a unanimous vote I was called up to the chair as President of the body.[3] Majr. William

[1] "Agreed to meet at 1 o'clock on Monday."

[2] "and repaired at the hour of one to the State House."

[3] The nomination of Washington for this position was made by Robert Morris, instructed by the Pennsylvania delegation, and seconded by John Rutledge. The only possible competitor was Benjamin Franklin, making the act of the Pennsylvanians all the more graceful. There was no opposing ballot, and, on being conducted to the chair by Morris and Rutledge, Washington "in a very emphatic manner thanked the Convention for the honor they had conferred on him ; reminded them of the novelty of the scene of business in which he was to act, lamented his want of better qualifications, and claimed the in-

Jackson[1] was appointed Secretary and a Comee. was chosen consisting of 3 members[2] to prepare rules and regulations for conducting the business; and after 'pointing door keepers, the Convention adjourned till Monday, to give time to the Comee. to report the matter referred to them.

Returned many visits today. Dined at Mr. Thos. Willing's and spt. the evening at my lodgings.

Saturday 26th.—Returned all my visits this forenoon,[3] dined with a club at the City Tavern, and spent the evening at my quarters writing letters.

Sunday 27th.—Went to the Romish Church,[4] to high mass. Dined; drank Tea, and spent the evening at my lodgings.

Monday 28th.—Met in Convention at 10 o'clock. Two States more, viz. Massachusetts and Connecticut, were on the floor today.

Established rules—agreeably to the plan brot. in by the Comee. for the Governmt. of the Convention, & adjourned. No Comns.[5] without doors.

Dined at home, and drank Tea in a large circle at Mr. [Tench] Francis's.

Tuesday 29th.—Attended Convention, and dined at home, after wch. accompanied Mrs. Morris to the benefit concert of a Mr. Juhan.

Wednesday 30th.—Attended Convention.

Dined with Mr. [John] Vaughan. Drank Tea and spent the evening at a Wednesday evening's party at Mr. & Mrs. [John] Lawrence's.

Thursday 31st.—The State of Georgia came on the Floor of

---

dulgence of the House towards the involuntary errors which his inexperience might occasion."—*Madison.* To Knox he wrote, 31 May: "I was, much against my wish, placed in the chair." Madison had in April foreseen the fitness of making him the conspicuous figure.—*To Randolph*, 15 April, 1787.

[1] Wilson nominated W. T. Franklin, and Hamilton, Jackson.

[2] Wythe, Hamilton, and Charles Pinckney.

[3] "Where I could get an account of the Lodg'gs of those to whom I was indebted for theirs."

[4] St. Mary's, on Fourth Street.—*Penn. Mag.*

[5] Communications (?)

the Convention to-day,[1] which made a representation of ten States.

Dined at Mr. Francis's and drank Tea with Mrs Meredith.

Friday, 1*st* JUNE.—Attending in Convention, and nothing being suffered to transpire, no minutes of the proceedings has been or will be inserted in this diary.

Dined with Mr. John Penn, and spent the evening at a superb entertainment at Bush-Hill given by Mr. Hamilton, at which were more than a hundred guests.

Saturday 2*nd.*—Majr. Jenifer coming in with sufficient powers for the purpose, gave a representation to Maryland, which brought all the States in the Union into Convention, except Rhode Island, which had refused to send delegates thereto.

Dined at the City Tavern with the Club, & spent the evening at my own quarters.

Sunday 3*d.* —Dined at Mr. Clymer's and drank Tea there also.

Monday 4*th.*—Attended Convention; Representation as on Saturday.

Reviewed (at the importunity of Genl. Mifflin and the officers,) the Light Infantry—Cavalry—and part of the Artillery, of the City.

Dined with Genl. Mifflin and drk. Tea with Mrs. Cadwallader.

Tuesday 5*th.*—Dined at Mr. Morris's with a large Company, & spent the evening there. Attended in Convention the usual hours.

Wednesday 6*th.*—In Convention as usual; dined at the Presidents (Doctr. Franklin's), and drank Tea there, after which retired to my lodgings and wrote letters for France.

Thursday 7*th.*—Attended Convention as usual. Dined with a club of Convention members at the Indian Queen.[2] Drank Tea and spent the evening at my lodgings.

Friday 8*th.*—Attended the Convention. Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening at my lodgns.

Saturday 9*th.*—At Convention. Dined with the Club at the City Tavern; Drank Tea, and set till 10 o'clock at Mr. Powell's.

[1] William Pierce and William Houston were the delegates.

[2] A famous hostelry, on Fourth above Chestnut Street. It was torn down in May, 1851.—*Penn. Mag.*

Sunday 10*th.*—Breakfasted by agreement at Mr. Powell's, and in company with him rid to see the botanical gardens of Mr. Bartram; which, tho' stored with many curious plts., shrubs, & trees, many of which are exotics, was not laid off with much taste, nor was it large.

From hence we rid to the Farm of one Jones, to see the effect of the plaister of Paris, which appeared obviously great. * * *

From hence we visited Mr. Powell's own farm, after which I went (by appointment) to the Hills and dined with Mr. & Mrs. Morris, returned to the city abt. dark.

Monday 11*th.*—Attended in Convention. Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening in my own room.

Tuesday 12*th.*—Dined and drank Tea at Mr. Morris's; went afterwards to a concert at the City Tavern.[1]

Wednesday 13*th.*—In convention; dined at Mr. Clymer's, & drank Tea there; spent the evening at Mr. Bingham's.

Thursday 14*th.*—Dined at Major [Thomas Lloyd] Moore's (after being in Convention,) and spent the evening at my own lodgings.

Friday 15*th.*—In Convention as usual, dined at Mr. Powell's & drank Tea there.

Saturday 16*th.*—In Convention, dined with the Club at the City Tavern, and drank Tea at Doctr. Shippings [Shippen] with Mrs. Livingston's party.[2]

Sunday 17*th.*—Went to Church, heard Bishop White preach, and see him ordain two Gentlemen Deacons; after wch. rid 8 miles into the Country & dined with Mr. Jno. Ross, in Chester County; returned in the Afternoon.

Monday 18*th.*—Attended the Convention. Dined at the Quarterly Meeting of the Sons of St. Patrick—held at the City Tavern. Drank Tea at Doctr. Shippens with Mrs. Livingston.

Tuesday 19*th.*—Dined (after leaving Convention,) in a family way at Mr. Morris's and spent the evening there in a very large company.

Wednesday 20*th.*—Attended Convention. Dined at Mr. Meredith's, and drank Tea there.

[1] Reinagle's concert. See *Penn. Mag.*

[2] "Spent evening at my own lodgings."

Thursday 21st.—Attended Convention. Dined at Mr. Prager's, and spent the evening in my chamber.

Friday 22nd.—Dined at Mr. Morris's, & drank Tea with Mr. Frans. Hopkinson.

Saturday 23rd.—In Convention. Dined at Doctr. Rushton's, and drank Tea at Mr. Morris's.

Sunday 24th.—Dined at Mr. Morris's, and spent the evening at Mr. Meredith's at Tea.

Monday 25th.—Attended Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, drank Tea there, and spent the evening in my Chamber.

Tuesday 26th.—Attended Convention. Partook of a family dinner with Govr. Randolph, and made one of a party to drink Tea at Gray's ferry.

Wednesday 27th.—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, drank Tea there also, and spent the evening in my Chamber.

Thursday 28th.—Attended Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's in a large Company (the news of his Bills being protested arriving last night a little mal á propos) drank Tea there & spent the evening in my Chamber.

Friday 29th.—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's and spent the evening there.

Saturday 30th.—Attended Convention. Dined with a club at[1] Springsbury, consisting of several associated families of the City, the Gentlemen of which met every Saturday, accompanied by the females of the families every other Saturday; this was the ladies day.[2]

Sunday 1st, JULY.—Dined & spent the evening at home.

Monday 2d.—Attended Convention. Dined with some of the Members of the Convention at the Indian Queen. Drank Tea at Mr. Bingham's, and walked afterwards in the State house yard.

Set this morning for Mr. Pine who wanted to correct his portt. of me.

Tuesday 3rd.—Sat before the meeting of the Convention for Mr. Peale, who wanted my picture to make a print or Metzotinto by.

[1] Cool Spring, Springsbury.

[2] Spent the evening at home.

Dined at Mr. Morris's, and drank Tea at Mr. Powell's. After which in Company with him, I attended the Agricultural Society at Carpenters Hall.

Wednesday 4th.—Visited Doctr. Shovat's Anatomical figures, and (the Convention having adjourned for the purpose,) went to hear an Oration on the anniversary of Independence delivered [1] by a Mr. Mitchell, a student of Law. After which I dined with the State Society of the Cincinnati, at Epplees Tavern, and drank Tea at Mr. Powell's.

Thursday 5th.—Attended Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, and drank Tea there; Spent the evening also.

Friday 6th.—Sat for Mr. Peale in the morning, attended Convention. Dined at the City Tavern with some members of Convention, and spent the evening at my lodgings.

Saturday 7th.—Attended Convention. Dined with the Club at Springsbury, and drank Tea at Mr. Meredith's.

Sunday 8th.—About 12 o'clock rid to Doctr. Logan's, near Germantown, where I dined. Returned in the evening, and drank Tea at Mr. Morris's.

Monday 9th.—Sat in the morning for Mr. Peale. Attended Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, & accompanied Mrs. Morris to Doctr. [John] Redman's, 3 miles in the Country, where we drank Tea and returned.

Tuesday 10th.—Attended Convention, dined at Mr. Morris's, drank Tea at Mr. Bingham's, and went to the play.[2]

Wednesday 11th.—Attended Convention, dined at Mr. Morris's and spent the evening there.

Thursday 12th.—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, and drank Tea with Mrs. Livingston.

Friday 13th.—In Convention. Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening at Mr. Morris's.

---

[1] At the Calvinist Church.

[2] "SPECTACULUM VITÆ. At the Opera House in Southwark. This evening the 10 July, will be performed a Concert, on the First Part of which will be introduced an entertainment, called the Dectective; or, the Servants Hall in an Uproar. To which will be added a Comic Opera in two acts called Love in a Camp, or Patrick in Prussia, &c., &c."—*Penn. Mag.*

Saturday 14*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Springsbury with the Club and went to the play in the afternoon.[1]

Sunday 15*th.*—Dined at Mr. Morris's and remained at home all day.

Monday 16*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's and drank Tea with Mrs. Powell.

Tuesday 17*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mrs. House's, and made an Excursion with a party for Tea to Gray's Ferry.

Wednesday 18*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. [Robert] Milligan's, & drank Tea at Mr. Meredeth's.

Thursday 19th—Dined (after coming out of Convention) at Mr. John Penn, the Youngers—Drank Tea & spent the evening at my lodgings.

Friday 20*th.*—In Convention. Dined at home and drank Tea at Mr. Clymer's.

Saturday 21*st.*—In Convention. Dined at Springsbury with the Club of Gentn. & Ladies. Went to the play afterwards.[2]

Sunday 22*nd.*—Left town by 5 o'clock A.M. Breakfasted at Genl. Mifflin's, rode up with him & others to the Spring Mills and returned to Genl. Mifflin's to dinner; after which proceeded to the City.

Monday 23*rd.*—In Convention as usual. Dined at Mr. Morris's and drank Tea at Lansdown (The seat of Mr. Penn.)

Tuesday 24*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's and drank Tea, by appointment, and partr. Invitation at Doctr. Rush's.

Wednesday 25*th.*—In Convention.—Dined at Mr. Morris's, drank Tea & spent the evening there.[3]

---

[1] A concert, introducing "The Tempest, or the Inchanted Island," and a "Grand Masque of Neptune and Amphitrite."—*Penn. Mag.*

[2] A Concert introducing a "Moral Poem, called the Crusade, or the Generous Sultan," by Mr. James Thomson, was recited, with the "Original Epilogue to Edward & Eleanora."—*Penn. Mag.*

[3] "Permit me to hint, whether it would not be wise and seasonable to provide a strong check to the admission of Foreigners into the administration of our national government, and to declare expressly that the commander-in-chief of the American army shall not be given to, nor devolve on, any but a natural *born* citizen."—*John Jay to Washington*, 25 July, 1787.

Thursday 26th.—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, drank Tea there, and stayed within all the afternoon.

Friday 27th.—In Convention, which adjourned this day, to meet again on Monday the 6th of August that a Comee. which had been appointed (consisting of 5 members) might have time to arrange, and draw into method and form the several matters which had been agreed to by the Convention as a constitution for the United States. Dined at Mr. Morris's, and drank Tea at Mr. Powell's.

Saturday 28th.—Dined with the club at Springsbury.—Drank Tea there, and spent the evening at my lodgings.

Sunday 29th.—Dined and spent the whole day at Mr. Morris's, principally in writing letters.

Monday 30th.—In Company with Mr. Govr. Morris's and in his Phaeton with my horses; went up to one Jane Moore's in the vicinity of Valley forge to get Trout.

Tuesday 31st.—Whilst Mr. Morriss was fishing I rid over the old cantonment of the American [army] of the winter 1777 & 8, visited all the Works, wch. were in Ruins; and the Incampments in woods where the ground had not been cultivated. * * *

On my return to Mrs. Moores I found Mr. Robt. Morris & his lady there.

Wednesday, 1st August.—About 11 O'clock, after it had ceased raining, we all set out for the City and dined at Mr. Morris's.

Thursday 2nd.—Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening at Mr. Morris's.

Friday 3rd.—In company with Mr. Robt. Morris and his lady, and Mr. Govr. Morris, I went up to Trenton on another fishing party. Lodged at Colo. Sam Ogden's, at the Trenton Works. In the evening fished, not very successfully.

Saturday 4th.—In the morning & between Breakfast and dinner, fished again with more success (for perch) than yesterday. Dined at Genl. [Philemon] Dickenson's on the east side of the river, a little above Trenton, & returned in the evening to Colo. Ogden's.

Sunday 5th.—Dined at Colo. Ogdens, early, after which,[1] in

[1] "About 4 o'clock."

the company with which I came, I returned to Philadelphia, at which we arrived abt. 9 O'clk.[1]

Monday 6*th.*—Met according to adjournment in Convention, & received the rept. of the Committee. Dined at Mr. Morris's and drank tea at Mr. Meredith's.

Tuesday 7*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's and spent the evening there also.

Wednesday 8*th.*—In Convention. Dined at the City Tavern, and remained there till near ten o'clock.

Thursday 9*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. [John] Swanwick's, and spent the afternn. in my own room, reading letters and accts. from home.

Friday 10*th.*—Dined (after coming out of Convention) at Mr. Bingham's, and drank Tea there; spent the evening at my lodgings.

Saturday 11*th.*—In Convention. Dined at the Club at Springsbury, and after Tea returned home.

Sunday 12*th.*—Dined at Bush-Hill with Mr. William Hamilton, spent the evening at home writing letters.

Monday 13*th.*—In Convention.[2] Dined at Mr. Morris's, and drank Tea with Mrs. Bache, at the President's.

Tuesday 14*th.*—In Convention. Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening at home.

Wednesday 15*th.*—The same as Yesterday.

Thursday 16*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. [Oliver] Pollock's, & spent the evening in my Chamber.

Friday 17*th.*—In Convention. Dined and drank Tea at Mr. Powell's.

Saturday 18*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Chief Justice McKean's—Spent the Afternoon & evening at my lodgings.

Sunday 19*th.*—In Company with Mr. Powell rode up to the

[1] "Halted an hour at Bristol."

[2] On this day Madison records that Washington voted in favor of giving to the House of Representatives the exclusive originating of money-bills. "He disapproved, and till now voted against the exclusive privilege. He gave up his judgment, he said, because it was not of any material weight with him, and was made an essential point with others, who, if disappointed, might be less cordial in other points of real weight."

White Marsh. Traversed my old incampment, and contempleated on the dangers which threatened the American Army at that place. Dined at Germantown, visited Mr. Blair McClenegan, drank Tea at Mr. Peters's, and returned to Philadelphia in the evening.[1]

Monday 20*th.*—In Convention. Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening at Mr. Morris's.

Tuesday 21*st.*—Did the like this day also.

Wednesday 22*nd.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's farm at the Hills—visited at Mr. Powell's in the Afternoon.

Thursday 23*rd.*—In Convention. Dined, drank Tea, & spent the evening at Mr. Morris's.

Friday 24*th.*—Did the same this day.

Saturday 25*th.*—In Convention.—Dined with the Club at Springsbury, & spent the afternoon at my lodgings.

Sunday 26*th.*—Rode into the Country for exercise 8 or 10 miles. Dined at the Hills, and spent the evening in my chamber writing letters.

Monday 27*th.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's and drank Tea at Mr. Powell's.

Tuesday 28*th*—In Convention. Dined, drank Tea, and spent the evening at Mr. Morris's.

Wednesday 29*th.*—Did the same as Yesterday.

Thursday 30*th.*—Again the same.

Friday 31*st.*—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's, and with a Party went to Lansdale & drank Tea with Mr. and Mrs. Penn.

Saturday, 1*st* SEPTEMBER.—Dined at Mr. Morris's after coming out of Convention, and drank Tea there.

[1] "By *slow*, I wish I could add, and *sure* movements, the business of the convention advances; but to say when it will end, or what will be the result, is more than I dare venture to do; and therefore shall hazard no opinion thereon. If something good does not proceed from the session, the defects cannot with propriety be charged to the hurry with which the business has been conducted, notwithstanding which many things may be forgot, some of them not well digested, and others, from the contrariety of sentiments with which such a body is pervaded, become a mere nullity; yet I wish a disposition may be found in Congress, the several State legislatures, and the community at large, to adopt the government, which may be agreed on in convention, because I am fully persuaded it is the best that can be obtained at the present moment under such a diversity of ideas as prevail."—*Washington to Knox*, 19 August, 1787.

Sunday 2nd.—Rode to Mr. Bartram's and other places in the country, dined and drank tea at Gray's ferry, and returned to the City in the evening.

Monday 3d.—In Convention Visited a Machine at Doctr. Franklin's (called a mangle) for pressing, in place of Ironing, Clothes from the wash, which machine from the facility with which it dispatches business is well calculated for Table cloths & such articles as have not pleats & irregular foldings and would be very useful in all large families. Dined, drank Tea, & spent the evening at Mr. Morris's.

Tuesday 4th.—In Convention. Dined &c. at Mr. Morris's.

Wednesday 5th.—In Convention. Dined at Mrs. House's, & drank Tea at Mr. Bingham's.

Thursday 6th.—In Convention. Dined at Doctr. [James] Hutchinson's and spent the Afternoon and evening at Mr. Morris's.

Friday 7th.—In Convention. Dined, and spent the afternoon at home (except when riding a few miles).

Saturday 8th.—In Convention. Dined at Springsbury with the Club, and spent the evening at my lodgings.

Sunday 9th.—Dined at Mr. Morris's after making a visit to Mr. Gardoqui, who, as he says, came from New York on a visit to me.

Monday 10th.—In Convention. Dined at Mr. Morris's & drank Tea there.

Tuesday 11th.—In Convention. Dined at home in a large company with Mr. Gardoqui—drank Tea, and spent the evening there.

Wednesday 12th.—In Convention. Dined at the Presidents and drank Tea at Mr. Pine's.

Thursday 13th.—Attended Convention. Dined at the Vice Presidents, Chas. Biddle's, Drank Tea at Mr. Powell's.

Friday 14th.—Attended Convention. Dined at the City Tavern, at an entertainmt. given on my acct. by the City Light Horse. Spent the evening at Mr. Merediths.

Saturday 15th.—Concluded the business, of Convention all to signing the proceedings, to effect which the House sat till 6 o'clock, and adjourned till Monday that the Constitution, which it was proposed to offer to the People might be engrossed, and a

number of printed copies struck off. Dined at Mr. Morris's and spent the evening there.

Mr. Gardoqui sat off for his return to New York this forenoon.

Sunday 16th.—Wrote many letters in the forenoon. Dined with Mr. & Mrs. Morris at the Hills, & returned to town in the evening.

Monday 17th.—Met in Convention, when the Constitution received the unanimous assent of 11 States and Colo. Hamilton's from New York (the only delegate from thence in Convention), and was subscribed to by every member present, except Govr. Randolph and Colo. Mason from Virginia, & Mr. Gerry from Massachusetts.[1]

The business being thus closed, the members adjourned to the City Tavern, dined together, and took a cordial leave of each other. After which I returned to my lodgings, did some business with, and received the papers from the Secretary of the Convention,[2] and retired to meditate on the momentous wk. which had been executed, after not less than five, for a large part of the time six and sometimes 7 hours sitting every day, Sundays & the ten days adjournment to give a Comee. opportunity &

[1] "When the President rose, for the purpose of putting the question [on representation], he said, that although his situation had hitherto restrained him from offering his sentiments on questions depending in the House, and, it might be thought, ought now to impose silence on him, yet he could not forbear expressing his wish that the change proposed might take place. It was much to be desired that the objections to the plan recommended might be made as few as possible. The smallness of the proportion of Representatives had been considered by many members of the Convention an insufficient security for the rights and interests of the people. He acknowledged that it had always appeared to himself among the exceptionable parts of the plan; and late as the present moment was for admitting amendments, he thought this of so much consequence, that it would give him much satisfaction to see it adopted."—*Madison's Debates.* The change was made. This is the only occasion on which any remarks from Washington in the Convention are recorded.

[2] "Major Jackson, after burning all the loose scraps of paper which belong to the Convention, will this evening wait upon the General with the Journals and other papers, which their vote directs to be delivered to his Excellency Monday evening."

time to arrange the business for more than four months,[1] [excepted.]

Tuesday 18*th.*—Finished what private business I had to do in the city this forenoon, took my leave of those families in wch. I had been most intimate, dined early at Mr. Morris's with whom & Mr. Gouvr. Morris's I parted at Gray's ferry and reached Chester in company with Mr. [John] Blair, who I invited to a seat in my Carriage till we should reach Mount Vernon.[2]

Wednesday 19*th.*—Prevented by rain (much of which fell in the night) from setting off till about 8 o'clock, when it ceased, & promising to be fair we departed, baited at Wilmington, Dined at Christiana, and lodged at the head of Elk. At the bridge near to which my horses (two of them) and carriage had a very narrow escape, for the rain which had fallen the preceeding evening having swelled the water considerably there was no fording it safely, I was reduced to the necessity therefore of remaining on the other side or of attempting to cross on an old, rotten & long disused bridge. Being anxious, to get on, I prefered the latter and in the attempt one of my horses fell fifteen feet at least, the other very near following which (had it happened) would have taken the carriage with baggage along with him and destroyed the whole effectually ; however by prompt assistance of some people at a mill just by and great exertion, the first horse was disengaged from his harness, the 2d. prevented from going quite through and drawn off, and the Carriage secured from hurt.

[1] "In the midst of hurry, and in the moment of my departure from this city, I address this letter to you. The principal, indeed the only design of it, is to fulfil the promise I made, that I would send to you the proceedings of the federal convention, as soon as the business was closed. More than this, circumstanced as I am at present, it is not in my power to do ; nor am I inclined to attempt it, as the enclosure must speak for itself, and will occupy your thoughts for some time.

"It is the result of four months' deliberation. It is now a child of fortune, to be fostered by some and buffeted by others. What will be the general opinion, or the reception of it, is not for me to decide ; nor shall I say any thing for or against it. If it be good, I suppose it will work its way ; if bad, it will recoil on the framers."—*Washington to Lafayette*, 18 September, 1787.

[2] "Reached Chester, where we lodged."

Thursday 20th.—Sett off after an early breakfast, crossed the Susquehanna and dined in Havre de Gras at the House of one Roger's—and lodged at Skirrett's Tavern, 12 miles short of Baltimore.

Friday 21st.—Breakfasted in Baltimore, dined at the Widow Balls (formerly Spurrier's), and lodged at Major Snowden's, who was not at home.

Saturday 22nd.—Breakfasted at Bladensburgh, and, passing through George Town, dined in Alexandria and reached home (with Mr. Blair) about sun set, after an absence of four months and 14 days.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

PHILADELPHIA, 30 May, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

* * * * * *

I come now to the other part of your letter, which concerns the Cincinnati, on which indeed I scarcely know what to say. It is a delicate, it is a perplexing subject. Not having the extract from the *Encyclopedia* before me, I cannot now undertake to enter into the merits of the publication.[1] It may therefore be as much as will be expected from me to observe, that the author appears in general to have detailed very candidly and ingenuously the motives and inducements, which give birth to the Society. Some of the subsequent facts, which I cannot, however,

[1] Mr. Jefferson had sent an extract from an article in the *Encyclopédie*, being an account of the Society of the Cincinnati, and Washington sent it to Knox, saying: "In my present state of mind I can hardly form an opinion whether it will be best to lay the matter before the society as coming from Mr. Jefferson, or as from a person of as good information as any in France. I must therefore leave it wholly to you to do as you may think most proper." —27 April, 1787.

from memory pretend to discuss with precision, are thought by gentlemen, who have seen the publication, to be misstated; insomuch that it is commonly said, truth and falsehood are so intimately blended, that it will become very difficult to sever them.

For myself, I only recollect two or three circumstances, in the narration of which palpable mistakes seem to have insinuated themselves. Monsieur L'Enfant did not arrive and bring the eagles during the session of the general meeting, but some time before that convention. The legislature of Rhode Island never passed any act whatever on the subject, (that ever came to my knowledge,) notwithstanding what Mirabeau and others had previously advanced. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the supposition of the author, that the Society was instituted partly because the country could not then pay the army, except the assertion that the United States have now made full and complete provision for paying, not only the arrearages due to the officers, but the half-pay or commutation at their option; from whence the author deduces an argument for its dissolution. I conceive this never had any thing to do with the institution, yet the officers in most of the States, who never have nor I believe expect to receive one farthing of the principal or interest on their final settlement securities, would be much obliged to the author to convince them how and when they received a compensation for their services. No foreigner, or American, who has been absent some time, will easily comprehend how tender those concerned are

on this point. I am sorry to say, a great many of the officers consider me as having in a degree committed myself by inducing them to trust too much in the justice of their country. They heartily wish no settlement had been made, because it has rendered them obnoxious to their fellow citizens, without affording them the least emolument.

For the reason I first mentioned, I cannot think it expedient for me to go into an investigation of the writer's deductions. I shall accordingly content myself with giving you some idea of the part I have acted, posterior to the first formation of the association.

When I found that you and many of the most respectable characters in the country would entirely acquiesce with the institution, as altered and amended in the first general meeting of 1784, and that the objections against the hereditary and other obnoxious parts were wholly done away, I was prevailed upon to accept the presidency. Happy in finding, (so far as I could learn by assiduous inquiry,) that all the clamors and jealousies, which had been excited against the original association, had ceased, I judged it a proper time in the last autumn to withdraw myself from any farther agency in the business, and to make my retirement complete, agreeably to my original plan. I wrote circular letters to all the State Societies announcing my wishes, informing that I did not propose to be at the general meeting, and requested not to be reëlected president. This was the last step of a public nature I expected ever to have taken. But, having since been appointed by

my native State to attend the national convention, and having been pressed to a compliance in a manner, which it hardly becomes me to describe, I have, in a measure, been obliged to sacrifice my own sentiments, and to be present in Philadelphia at the very time of the general meeting of the Cincinnati. After which I was not at liberty to decline the presidency, without placing myself in an extremely disagreeable situation with relation to that brave and faithful class of men, whose persevering patriotism and friendship I had experienced on so many trying occasions.

The business of this convention is as yet too much in embryo to form any opinion of the conclusion. Much is expected from it by some; not much by others; and nothing by a few. That something is necessary, none will deny; for the situation of the general government, if it can be called a government, is shaken to its foundation, and liable to be overturned by every blast. In a word, it is at an end; and, unless a remedy is soon applied, anarchy and confusion will inevitably ensue. But having greatly exceeded the bounds of a letter, I will only add assurances of that esteem, regard, and respect, with which I have the honor to be, &c.

TO DAVID STUART.

PHILADELPHIA, 1 July, 1787.

DEAR SIR:

I have been favored with your letter of the 17th ultimo. * * *

Rhode Island, from our last accts. still perseveres

in that impolitic, unjust, and one might add without much impropriety scandalous conduct, which seems to have marked all her public Councils of late. Consequently, no Representation is yet here from thence. New Hampshire, tho' Delegates have been appointed, is also unrepresented. Various causes have been assigned, whether well, or ill-founded I shall not take upon me to decide. The fact, however, is that they are not here. Political contests, and want of money, are amidst the reasons assigned for the non-attendance of the members.

As the rules of the convention prevent me from relating any of the proceedings of it, and the gazettes contain, more fully than I could detail, other occurrences of a public nature, I have little to communicate to you on the article of news. Happy indeed would it be, if the convention shall be able to recommend such a firm and permanent government for this Union, that all who live under it may be secure in their lives, liberty, and property; and thrice happy would it be, if such a recommendation should obtain. Every body wishes, every body expects something from the convention; but what will be the final result of its deliberation, the book of fate must disclose. Persuaded I am, that the primary cause of all our disorders lies in the different State governments, and in the tenacity of that power, which pervades the whole of their systems. Whilst independent sovereignty is so ardently contended for, whilst the local views of each State, and separate interests, by which they are too much governed, will not yield

to a more enlarged scale of politics, incompatibility in the laws of different States, and disrespect to those of the general government, must render the situation of this great country weak, inefficient, and disgraceful. It has already done so, almost to the final dissolution of it. Weak at home and disregarded abroad is our present condition, and contemptible enough it is.

Entirely unnecessary was it to offer any apology for the sentiments you were so obliging as to offer me. I have had no wish more ardent, through the whole progress of this business, than that of knowing what kind of government is best calculated for us to live under. No doubt there will be a diversity of sentiments on this important subject; and, to inform the judgment, it is necessary to hear all arguments that can be advanced. To please all is impossible, and to attempt it would be vain. The only way, therefore, is, under all the views in which it can be placed, and with a due consideration to circumstances, habits, &c., &c., to form such a government as will bear the scrutinizing eye of criticism, and trust it to the good sense and patriotism of the people to carry it into effect. Demagogues, men who are unwilling to lose any of their State consequence, and interested characters in each, will oppose any general government. But let these be regarded rightly, and justice, it is to be hoped, will at length prevail. My best wishes attend Mrs. Stuart, yourself, and the girls. If I can render any service whilst I remain here, I shall be happy in doing it. I am, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

DEAR SIR: PHILADELPHIA, 10 July, 1787.

I thank you for your communication of the 3d. When I refer you to the state of the counsels, which prevailed at the period you left this city, and add that they are now if possible in a worse train than ever, you will find but little ground on which the hope of a good establishment can be formed. In a word, I almost despair of seeing a favorable issue to the proceedings of our convention, and do therefore repent having had any agency in the business.

The men, who oppose a strong and energetic government, are in my opinion narrow-minded politicians, or are under the influence of local views. The apprehension expressed by them, that the *people* will not accede to the form proposed, is the *ostensible*, not the *real* cause of opposition. But, admitting that the present sentiment is as they prognosticate, the proper question ought nevertheless to be, Is it, or is it not, the best form that such a country as this can adopt? If it be the best, recommend it, and it will assuredly obtain, maugre opposition. I am sorry you went away. I wish you were back. The crisis is equally important and alarming, and no opposition, under such circumstances, should discourage exertions till the signature is offered. I will not at this time trouble you with more than my best wishes and sincere regard.

I am, dear Sir, &c.[1]

[1] "The disturbances in Massachusetts have subsided, but there are seeds of discontent in every part of this Union; ready to produce other disorders, if the

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

PHILADELPHIA, 19 July, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I have had the honor to receive your favor of the 15th instant, and thank you for the ordinance which was enclosed in it. My sentiments, with respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, have been long fixed, and are not dissimilar to those, which are expressed in your letter. I have ever been of opinion, that the true policy of the Atlantic States, would be instead of contending prematurely for the free navigation of that river (which eventually, and perhaps as soon as it shall be our true interest to obtain it,) must happen, to open and improve the natural communications with the western country, through which the produce of it might be transported with convenience and ease to our markets. Till you get low down the Ohio, I conceive, that it would, (considering the length of the voyage to New Orleans, the difficulty of the current, and the time necessary to perform it in,) be the inter-

wisdom of the present convention should not be able to devise, and the good sense of the people be found ready to adopt, a more vigorous and energetic government, than the one under which we now live; for the present, from experience, has been found too feeble and inadequate to give that security, which our liberties and property render absolutely essential, and which the fulfilment of public faith loudly requires.

"Vain is it to look for respect from abroad, or tranquillity at home; vain is it to murmur at the detention of our western posts, or complain of the restriction of our commerce; vain are all the attempts to remedy the evils complained of by Mr. Dumas, to discharge the interest due on foreign loans, or satisfy the claims of foreign officers, the neglect of doing which is a high impeachment of our national character, and is hurtful to the feelings of every well-wisher to this country in and out of it; vain is it to talk of chastising the Algerines, or doing ourselves justice in any other respect, till the wisdom and force of the Union can be more concentrated and better applied."—*Washington to Lafayette*, 15 August, 1787.

est of the inhabitants to bring their produce to our ports; and sure I am, there is no other tie by which they will long form a link in the chain of federal union. I believe, however, from the temper in which those people appear to be, and from the ambitious and turbulent spirit of some of their demagogues, that it has become a moot point to determine, (when every circumstance which attends this business is brought into view,) what is best to be done. The State of Virginia having taken the matter up with so high a hand, is not among the least embarrassing or disagreeable parts of the difficulty. * * *

I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

TO PATRICK HENRY.

MOUNT VERNON, 24 September, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

In the first moment after my return, I take the liberty of sending you a copy of the constitution, which the federal convention has submitted to the people of these States. I accompany it with no

[1] "I staid two days [Octo. 5–7] with General Washington at Mount Vernon about six weeks ago. He is in perfect good health, and looks almost as well as he did twenty years ago. I never saw him so keen for anything in my life as he is for the adoption of the new scheme of government. As the eyes of all America are turned towards this truly great and good man for the first President, I took the liberty of sounding him upon it. He appears to be earnestly against going into public life again; pleads in excuse for himself his love of retirement and his advanced age, but notwithstanding of these, I am fully of opinion he may be induced to appear once more on the public stage of life. I form my opinion from what passed between us in a very long and serious conversation, as well as from what I could gather from Mrs. Washington on same subject."—*Alexander Donald to Thomas Jefferson*, 12 November, 1787.

observations. Your own judgment will at once discover the good and the exceptionable parts of it; and your experience of the difficulties, which have ever arisen when attempts have been made to reconcile such variety of interests and local prejudices, as pervade the several States, will render explanation unnecessary. I wish the constitution, which is offered, had been made more perfect; but I sincerely believe it is the best that could be obtained at this time. And, as a constitutional door is opened for amendment hereafter, the adoption of it, under the present circumstances of the Union, is in my opinion desirable.

From a variety of concurring accounts it appears to me, that the political concerns of this country are in a manner suspended by a thread, and that the convention has been looked up to, by the reflecting part of the community, with a solicitude which is hardly to be conceived; and, if nothing had been agreed on by that body, anarchy would soon have ensued, the seeds being deeply sown in every soil. I am, &c.[1]

[1] A copy of the same letter was sent to Benjamin Harrison, and also to Thomas Nelson.

"I have to lament, that I cannot bring my mind to accord with the proposed constitution. The concern I feel on this account is really greater than I can express. Perhaps mature reflection may furnish me reasons to change my present sentiments into a conformity with the opinions of those personages, for whom I have the highest reverence."—*Patrick Henry to Washington*, 19 October, 1787.

"I feel myself deeply interested in every thing that you have had a hand in, or that comes from you; and am so well assured of the solidity of your judgment, and the rectitude of your intentions, that I shall never stick at trifles to conform myself to your opinion. In the present instance I am so totally uninformed, as to the general situation of America, that I can form no judgment of the necessity the convention was under to give us such a constitution as it has done. If our condition is not very desperate, I have my fears that the remedy will prove worse than the disease. Age makes men often over cautious. I am

TO COLONEL DAVID HUMPHREYS.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 October, 1787.

MY DEAR HUMPHREYS,

Your favor of the 28th Ulto. came duly to hand, as did the former of June. With great pleasure I received the intimation of your spending the winter under this Roof.—The invitation was not less sincere, than the reception will be cordial. The only stipulations I shall contend for are, that in all things you shall do as you please—I will do the same; and that no ceremony may be used or any restraint be imposed on any one.

The Constitution that is submitted, is not free from imperfections, but there are as few radical defects in it as could well be expected, considering the heterogenious mass of which the Convention was composed and the diversity of interests that are to be attended to. As a Constitutional door is opened for

willing to attribute my fears to that cause; but, from whatever source they spring, I cannot divest myself of an opinion, that the seeds of civil discord are plentifully sown in very many of the powers given, both to the President and Congress, and that, if the constitution is carried into effect, the States south of the Potomac will be little more than appendages to those to the northward of it. You will say that general charges are things without force. They are so; but, in the present instance, I do not withhold particular observations because I want them, but that I would not tire your patience by entering deeply into a subject, before I have heard the reasons, which operated in favor of the measures taken. After the meeting of the Assembly, and hearing from those, who had a hand in the work, the reasons that operated with them in favor of their measures, I will then more at large give you my sentiments. In the interim I shall only say, that my objections chiefly lie against the unlimited powers of taxation and the regulations of trade, and the jurisdictions that are to be established in every State altogether independent of their laws. The sword and such powers will, nay, in the nature of things they must, sooner or later, establish a tyranny not inferior to the triumvirate or *centumviri* of Rome."—*Benjamin Harrison to Washington*, 4 October, 1787.

future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them and I wish it may be by as great a majority of them as it was by that of the Convention; but this is hardly to be expected because the importance and sinister views of too many characters, will be affected by the change.—Much will depend however upon literary abilities, and the recommendation of it by good pens should be *openly*, I mean, publickly afforded in the Gazettes.—Go matters however as they may, I shall have the consolation to reflect that no objects but the public good—and that peace and harmony which I wished to see prevail in the Convention, obtruded even for a moment in my bosom during the whole Session long as it was—What reception this State will give to the proceedings in all its extent of territory, is more than I can inform you of; in these parts it is advocated beyond my expectation—the great opposition (if great there should be) will come from the Southern and Western Counties from whence I have not as yet, received any accounts that are to be depended on.

I condole with you on the loss of your Parents; but as they lived to a good old age you could not be unprepared for the shock, tho' it is painful to bid an everlasting adieu to those we love, or revere.—Reason, Religion and Philosophy may soften the anguish of it, but time alone can eradicate it.

As I am beginning to look for you, I shall add no more in this letter but the wishes of the Family and the affectionate regards of a Sincere friend, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 October, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your letter of the 30th ultimo. It came by the last post. I am better pleased, that the proceedings of the convention are submitted from Congress by a unanimous vote, feeble as it is, than if they had appeared under strong marks of approbation without it. This apparent unanimity will have its effect. Not every one has opportunities to peep behind the curtain; and, as the multitude are often deceived by externals, the appearance of unanimity in that body on this occasion will be of great importance. The political tenets of Colo. M[ason] and Colo. R. H. L[ee] are always in unison. It may be asked which of them gives the tone. Without hesitation I answer the latter, because I believe the latter will receive it from no one. He has I am informed rendered himself obnoxious in Philadelphia, by the pains he took to disseminate his objections amongst some of the leaders of the seceding members of the Legislature of that State. His conduct is not less reprobated in this country; how it will be relished *generally* is yet to be learnt by me.[1]

As far as accounts have been received from the

[1] On reaching Congress Madison found certain ideas unfavorable to the Constitution were fostered by Richard Henry Lee and Dane, of Massachusetts, on the ground first that the Convention had exceeded its powers in devising a new frame of government, and later, that the plan proposed was seriously defective. An attempt to amend the Constitution in Congress was fortunately defeated, and Congress unanimously resolved to send the report of the Convention to the respective legislatures, to be submitted to a convention of delegates chosen by the people in each.

southern and western counties, the sentiment with respect to the proceedings of the convention is favorable. Whether the knowledge of this, or conviction of the impropriety of withholding the constitution from State conventions, has worked most in the breast of Colonel Mason, I will not decide ; but the fact is, he has declared unequivocally, in a letter to me, for its going to the people. Had his sentiments, however, been opposed to the measure, his instructions, which are given by the freeholders of this county to their representatives, would have secured his vote for it. Yet I have no doubt, but that his assent will be accompanied by the most tremendous apprehensions, which the highest coloring can give to his objections. To alarm the people seems to be the groundwork of his plan. The want of a qualified navigation act is already declared to be a mean by which the price of produce in the southern States will be reduced to nothing, and will become monopoly of the eastern and northern States. To enumerate the whole of his objections is unnecessary, because they are detailed in the address of the seceding members of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, (which no doubt you have seen.)[1]

I scarcely think any powerful opposition will be made to the constitution's being submitted to a convention of the people of this State. If it is given, it will be there, at which I hope you will make it convenient to be present. Explanations will be wanting, and none can give them with more accuracy and pro-

[1] Printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 4 October, 1787, also in *Pennsylvania and the Federal Constitution*, 73.

priety than yourself. The sentiments of Mr. Henry, with respect to the constitution, are not known in these parts. Mr. Joseph Jones, who it seems was in Alexandria before the convention broke up, was of opinion, that they would not be inimical to the proceedings of it. Others think, as the advocate of a paper emission, he cannot be friendly to a constitution which is an effectual bar.

From circumstances, which have been related, it is conjectured that the Governor[1] wishes he had been among the subscribing members; but time will disclose more than we know at present, with respect to the whole of the business, and, when I hear more, I will write to you again. In the mean while I pray you to be assured of the sincere regard and affection with which I am, my dear Sir, &c.

P. S. Having received, (in a letter) from Colonel Mason, a detail in writing of his objections to the proposed constitution, I enclose you a copy of them.[2]

[1] Edmund Randolph. His refusal to sign was set down to his chagrin in not being able to carry every thing his own way, and to his desire for popularity.

[2] Colonel Mason said, in the letter here referred to: "I take the liberty to enclose to you my objections to the new constitution of government, which a little moderation and temper at the latter end of the convention might have removed. I am, however, most decidedly of opinion, that it ought to be submitted to the people for that special purpose; and, should any attempt be made to prevent the calling of such a convention here, such a measure shall have every opposition in my power to give it. You will readily observe, that my objections are not numerous (the greater part of the enclosed paper containing reasonings upon the probable effects of the exceptionable parts), though in my mind some of them are capital ones."—October 7th.

Mason's objections are printed in Ford, *Pamphlets on the Constitution*, 327. Iredell's answer may be found in the same collection.

"As the enclosed Advertiser contains a speech of Mr. Wilson's (as able, candid and honest a member as [was] in convention) which will place the most

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, October, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 3d instant came duly to hand. The fourth day after leaving Philadelphia I reached home, and found Mrs. Washington and the family tolerably well, but the fruits of the earth almost entirely destroyed by one of the severest droughts (in this neighborhood,) that has ever been experienced. The crops pretty generally have been injured in this State below the mountains, but not to the degree that mine, and some others in a small circle around me, have suffered.

The constitution is now before the judgment-seat. It has, as was expected, its adversaries and supporters. Which will preponderate is yet to be decided. The former more than probably will be most active, as the major part of them will, it is to be feared, be governed by sinister and self-important motives, to which every thing in their breasts must yield. The opposition from another class of them may perhaps, (if they should be men of reflection, candor, and information,) subside in the solution of the following

of M[ason's] objections in their true point of light, I send it to you. The republication will (if you can get it done) be serviceable at this juncture. His ipso facto objection does not, I believe require any answer: every mind must recoil at the idea. And with respect to the navigation act, I am mistaken if any men, bodies of men, or Countries, will enter into any compact or treaty, if one of the three is to have a negative control over the other two. But granting that it is an evil, it will infallibly work *its* own cure. There must be reciprocity, or no union. Which of the two is preferable, will not become a question in the mind of any true patriot."—*Washington to David Stuart*, 17 October, 1787. Wilson's speech is in Ford, *Pamphlets on the Constitution*, 155.

simple questions. 1. Is the constitution, which is submitted by the convention, preferable to the government, (if it can be called one,) under which we now live? 2. Is it probable that more confidence would at the time be placed in another convention, provided the experiment should be tried, than was placed in the last one, and is it likely that a better agreement would take place therein? What would be the consequences if these should not happen, or even from the delay, which must inevitably follow such an experiment? Is there not a constitutional door open for alterations or amendments? and is it not likely that real defects will be as readily discovered after as before trial? and will not our successors be as ready to apply the remedy as ourselves, if occasion should require it? To think otherwise will, in my judgment, be ascribing more of the *amor patriæ*, more wisdom and more virtue to ourselves, than I think we deserve.

It is highly probable, that the refusal of our Governor and Colonel Mason to subscribe to the proceedings of the convention will have a bad effect in this State; for, as you well observe, they *must* not only assign reasons for the justification of their own conduct, but it is highly probable that these reasons will be clothed in most terrific array for the purpose of alarming.[1] Some things are already addressed to the fears of the people, and will no doubt have their effect.

[1] Randolph explained his position in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Delegates, 10 October, 1787. It was widely circulated in the newspapers, and printed in pamphlet form. It was reprinted in Ford, *Pamphlets on the Constitution*, 359.

As far, however, as the sense of this part of the country has been taken, it is strongly in favor of the proposed constitution. Further I cannot speak with precision. If a powerful opposition is given to it, the weight thereof will, I apprehend, come from the south side of James River, and from the western counties. I am, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 October, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor without date came to my hand by the last post. It is with unfeigned concern I perceive that a political dispute has arisen between Governor Clinton and yourself. For both of you I have the highest esteem and regard. But, as you say it is insinuated by some of your political adversaries, and may obtain credit, "that you *palmed* yourself upon me, and was *dismissed* from my family," and call upon me to do you justice by a recital of the facts, I do therefore explicitly declare, that both charges are entirely unfounded. With respect to the first, I have no cause to believe, that you took a single step to accomplish, or had the most distant idea of receiving an appointment in my family till you were invited into it; and, with respect to the second, that your quitting it was altogether the effect of your own choice.

When the situation of this country calls loudly for vigor and unanimity, it is to be lamented that gentlemen of talents and character should disagree in their

sentiments for promoting the public weal; but unfortunately this ever has been, and most probably ever will be, the case in the affairs of mankind.

Having scarcely been from home since my return from Philadelphia, I can give little information with respect to the *general* reception of the new constitution in *this* State. In Alexandria, however, and some of the adjacent counties, it was embraced with an enthusiastic warmth of which I had no conception. I expect, notwithstanding, violent opposition will be given to it by some characters of weight and influence in the State. Mrs. Washington unites with me in best wishes to Mrs. Hamilton and yourself. I am, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 22 October, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

When I wrote to you last, I was possessed of very little information of the sentiments of this State on the new constitution beyond the circle of Alexandria. Since, by the last post, I have received a letter from a member of the assembly in Richmond,[1] containing the following paragraphs.

"I believe such an instance has not happened before since the revolution, that there should be a House on the first day of the session, and business immediately taken up. This was not only the case on Monday, but there was a full House when Mr. Prentiss was called up to the chair as speaker, there being no opposition. Thus the session has commenced peaceably.

[1] David Stuart, or Bushrod Washington.

"It gives me much pleasure to inform you, that the sentiments of the members are infinitely more favorable to the constitution, than the most zealous advocates for it could have expected. I have not met with one in all my inquiries (and I have made them with great diligence) opposed to it, except Mr. Henry, who I have heard is so, but could only conjecture it from a conversation with him on the subject. Other members, who have also been active in their inquiries, tell me that they have met with none opposed to it. It is said, however, that old Mr. Cabell of Amherst disapproves of it. Mr. Nicholas has declared himself a warm friend to it. The transmissory note of Congress was before us to day, when Mr. Henry declared, that it transcended our powers to decide on the constitution, that it must go before a convention,—as it was insinuated he would aim at preventing this, much pleasure was discovered at the declaration.

"Thursday next (the 25th) is fixed upon for taking up the question of calling the convention, and fixing the time of its meeting. In the mean time five thousand copies are ordered to be printed, to be dispersed by the members in their respective counties for the information of the people. I cannot forbear mentioning, that the Chancellor Pendleton espouses the constitution so warmly, as to declare he will give it his aid in a convention if his health will permit. As there are few better judges of such subjects, this must be deemed a fortunate circumstance."

As the above quotation is the sum of my information, I shall add nothing more on the subject of the proposed government at this time.

Mr. C. Pinckney is unwilling, (I perceive by the enclosures contained in your favor of the 13th,) to lose any fame that can be acquired by the publication of his sentiments. If the subject of the navigation of the Mississippi could have remained as silent, and glided as gently down the stream of time for a while, as the waters do that are contained within the

banks, it would, I confess, have comported more with my ideas of sound policy, than any decision that can be come to at this day. With sentiments the most affectionate and friendly, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO MATHEW CAREY.

MOUNT VERNON, 29 October, 1787.

SIR,

The last post brought me your letter of the 22d.—your application to me for the loan of £100 is an evidence of your unacquaintedness with my inability to lend money. To be candid—my expenditures are never behind my income—and this year (occasioned by the severest drouth that ever was known in this neighborhood) instead of selling grain which heretofore has been my principal source of revenue it is not £500 that will purchase enough for the support of my family.—After this disclosure of my situation you will be readily persuaded that inclination to serve without the means of accomplishing it, is of little avail.—This however is the fact so far as it respects the point in question.

As you seem anxious that the contents of your letter should not be known I put it in your own power to destroy it by returning it under the same cover with this.

I wish sucess to your Museum, and am, &c.[1]

[1] "I should be glad to know precisely whether I am to expect any and what part of the £200 on which you assured me in Philadelphia I might absolutely rely, and the half of which you informed me in November, should be sent to me

TO ARCHIBALD JOHNSTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 30 October, 1787.

SIR,

My fixed determination is, that no person whatever shall hunt upon my grounds or waters.—To grant leave to one, and refuse another, would not only be drawing a line of discrimination which would be offensive, but would subject one to great inconvenience—for my strict and positive orders to all my people are if they hear a gun fired upon my Land to go immediately in pursuit of it.—Permission therefore to any one would keep them either always in pursuit—or make them inattentive to my orders under the supposition of its belonging to a licensed person by which means I should be obtruded upon by others who to my cost I find had other objects in view. Besides, as I have not lost my relish for this sport when I can find time to indulge myself in it, and Gentlemen who come to the House are pleased with it, it is my wish not to have the game within my jurisdiction disturbed. For these reasons I beg you will not take my refusal amiss, because I would give the same to my brother if he lived off my land.

I am, &c.

by your servant in ten days if you could not get the residue. I have put the sheriff of this county off three times; if he comes again I must, if I have no further expectation from you, suffer him to make distress, as I raised nothing last year for sale, and allotted this money for the payment of my taxes. . . . In the morning I shall leave home for a meeting of the Directors of the Potomack Co., at the Falls of the Shenandoah, from whence I do not expect to be returned in less than ten days."—*Washington to John Francis Mercer*, 11 January, 1788.

TO ARTHUR YOUNG.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 November, 1787.

* * * * * *

Before I undertake to give the information you request, respecting the arrangements of farms in this neighborhood, &c., I must observe that there is, perhaps, scarcely any part of America, where farming has been less attended to than in this State. The cultivation of tobacco has been almost the sole object with men of landed property, and consequently a regular course of crops have never been in view. The general custom has been, first to raise a crop of Indian corn (maize) which according to the mode of cultivation, is a good preparation for wheat; then a crop of wheat; after which the ground is respited (except from weeds, and every trash that can contribute to its foulness) for about eighteen months; and so on, alternately, without any dressing, till the land is exhausted; when it is turned out, without being sown with grass-seeds, or any method taken to restore it; and another piece is ruined in the same manner. No more cattle is raised than can be supported by lowland meadows, swamps, &c., and the tops and blades of Indian corn; as very few persons have attended to sowing grasses, and connecting cattle with their crops. The Indian corn is the chief support of the laborers and horses. Our lands, as I mentioned in my first letter to you, were originally very good; but use, and abuse, have made them quite otherwise.

The above is the mode of cultivation which has

been generally pursued here, but the system of husbandry which has been found so beneficial in England, and which must be greatly promoted by your valuable annals, is now gaining ground. There are several (among which I may class myself), who are endeavoring to get into your regular and systematic course of cropping, as fast as the nature of the business will admit; so that I hope in the course of a few years, we shall make a more respectable figure as farmers, than we have hitherto done.

I will, agreeable to your desire, give you the prices of our products as nearly as I am able; but you will readily conceive from the foregoing account, that they cannot be given with any precision. Wheat, for the four last years, will average about 4s. sterling per bushel, of eight gallons. Rye, about 2s. 4d.—Oats, 1s. 6d.—Beans, pease, &c., have not been sold in any quantities.—Barley is not made here, from a prevailing opinion that the climate is not adapted to it; I however, in opposition to prejudice, sowed about 50 bushels last spring, and found that it yielded a proportionate quantity with any other kind of grain which I sowed; I might add, more. Cows may be bought at about 3l. sterling, per head. Cattle for the slaughter vary from 2¼d. to 4½d. sterling per lb., the former being the current price in summer; the latter in the winter or spring. Sheep at 12s. sterling, per head; and wool at 1s. sterling per lb. I am not able to give you the price of labor, as the land is cultivated here wholly

by slaves, and the price of labor in the towns is fluctuating, and governed altogether by circumstances. * * *[1]

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 5 November, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 18th ulto. came duly to hand.—As no subject is more interesting, and seems so much to engross the attention of every one as the proposed Constitution I shall, (though it is probable your communications from Richmond are regular and full with respect to this, and other matters, which

[1] "You give me some reason to hope for the result of your *thoughts*, or *experiments*, on a more eligible system of agriculture.—To receive it would afford me pleasure.—That the one which is now in general practice (if it can be called a system) is beyond description ruinous to our lands, need no other proof of the fact than the gullied and exhausted state of them, which is every where to be met with—but what change is most likely to restore the land with such means as is in our power to apply which will at the same time be productive to the Proprietor, is the question—and an important one—a question too which admits of no other satisfactory solution than such as is derived from a *course* of experiments by intelligent and observant farmers; who will combine things and circumstances together—Theoretical opinions should have no share in the determination, and what is good and profitable husbandry in one Country, may not be so in another—Articles which are very saleable in Europe might find no market in America, and if produced abundantly would answer no other end than to encumber our Barns or Granaries. Consequently two things must be engrafted into our plan, 1st Crops which are useful on our farms, or saleable in our markets—and 2d the intermixing these crops by such relations and with such dressings as will improve, instead of exhausting our lands.—To effect these is the great desiderata of Farming, and ought to be the pursuit of every farmer.—On this ground every experiment is a treasure—and the authors of them valuable members of Society.—Hence also the Societies which are formed for the encouragement, and promulgation, of these experiments, in other Country's have rendered such essential services to the improved and improving States of agriculture in the old world and are so worthy of imitation in the new."—*Washington to Charles Carter*, 20 January, 1788.

employ the consideration of the Assembly) give you the extract of a letter from Doct. Stuart, which follows—

"Yesterday (the 26th of Oct.) according to appointment, the calling of a Convention of the people was discussed.—Though no one doubted a pretty general unanimity on this question ultimately, yet, it was feared from the avowed opposition of Mr. Henry and Mr. Harrison, that an attempt would be made, to do it in a manner that would convey to the people an unfavorable impression of the opinion of the House with respect to the Constitution; and this was accordingly attempted.—It was however soon baffled.—The motion was to this effect; that a Convention should be called to adopt—reject—or amend—the proposed Constitution.—

"As this conveyed an idea that the House conceived an amendment necessary it was rejected as improper.—It now stands recommended to them, on (I think) unexceptionable ground, for their full and free consideration.—My colleague arrived here on the evening before this question was taken up; I am apt to think that the opponents to the Constitution were much disappointed in their expectations of support from him, as he not only declared himself in the fullest manner for a Convention, but also, that notwithstanding his objections, so federal was he, that he would adopt it, if nothing better could be obtained.—The time at which the Convention is to meet, is fixed to the first of June next.—The variety of sentiments on this subject was almost infinite; neither friends or foes agreeing in any one period.—There is to be no exclusion of persons on acct. of their Offices.[1]

[1] "The new constitution has, as the public prints will have informed you, been handed to the people of this State by an unanimous vote of the Assembly; but it is not to be inferred from hence, that its opponents are silenced. On the contrary, there are many, and some powerful ones; some of whom, it is said, by overshooting the marks, have lessened their weight. Be this as it may, their assiduity stands unrivalled, whilst the friends to the constitution content themselves with a bare avowal of their approbation of it. Thus stands the matter at present in the State. I think nevertheless the voice is for it."—*Washington to Hamilton*, 10 November, 1787.

"Notwithstanding this decision the accounts of the prevailing sentiments without, especially on James river and Westwardly, are various.—Nothing decisive, I believe, can be drawn—As far as I can form an opinion however, from different persons, it should seem as if Men judged of others, by their own affection or disaffection to the proposed government.—In the Northern Neck the sentiment I believe, is very generally for it.—I think it will be found such thro the State."

The Doctor further adds:

"The subject of British debts was taken up the other day when Mr. Henry, reflected in a very warm declamatory manner, on the circular letter of Congress, on that subject.—It is a great and important matter and I hope will be determined as it should be notwithstanding his opposition."[1]

So far as the sentiments of Maryland, with respect to the proposed Constitution, have come to my knowledge, they are strongly in favor of it; but as this is the day on which the Assembly of that State *ought* to meet, I will say nothing in anticipation of the opinion of it. Mr. Carroll of Carrolton, and Mr. Thos. Johnson, are declared friends to it.

With sincere regards and affect.

TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 November, 1787.

DEAR BUSHROD,

In due course of post your letters of the 19th and 26th ultimo came to hand, and I thank you for the communications therein,—for a continuation in mat-

[1] "With respect to British debts, I would fain hope, let the eloquence or abilities of any man or set of men be what they may, that the good sense and justice of this State will never suffer a violation of the treaty, or pass acts of injustice to individuals. Honesty in States, as well as individuals, will ever be found the soundest policy."—*Washington to Stuart*, 5 November, 1787.

ters of importance I shall be obliged to you. That the Assembly would afford the people an opportunity of deciding on the proposed constitution, I had scarcely a doubt. The only question with me was, whether it would go forth under favorable auspices, or receive the stamp of disapprobation. The opponents I expected (for it ever has been, that the adversaries to a measure are more active than its friends,) would endeavor to stamp it with unfavorable impressions, in order to bias the judgment, that is ultimately to decide on it. This is evidently the case with the writers in opposition, whose objections are better calculated to alarm the fears, than to convince the judgment, of their readers. They build their objections upon principles, that do not exist, which the constitution does not support them in, and the existence of which has been, by an appeal to the constitution itself, flatly denied ; and then, as if they were unanswerable, draw all the dreadful consequences that are necessary to alarm the apprehensions of the ignorant or unthinking. It is not the interest of the major part of those characters to be convinced ; nor will their local views yield to arguments, which do not accord with their present or future prospects.

A candid solution of a single question, to which the plainest understanding is competent, does, in my opinion, decide the dispute ; namely, Is it best for the States to unite or not to unite? If there are men, who prefer the latter, then unquestionably the constitution which is offered must, in their estimation, be wrong from the words, "*We the people*," to the signa-

ture, inclusively; but those, who think differently, and yet object to parts of it, would do well to consider, that it does not lie with any *one* State, or the *minority* of the States, to superstruct a constitution for the whole. The separate interests, as far as it is practicable, must be consolidated; and local views must be attended to, as far as the nature of the case will admit. Hence it is, that every State has some objection to the present form, and these objections are directed to different points. That which is most pleasing to one is obnoxious to another, and so *vice versâ*. If then the union of the whole is a desirable object, the component parts must yield a little in order to accomplish it. Without the latter, the former is unattainable; for again I repeat it, that not a single State, nor the minority of the States, can force a constitution on the majority. But, admitting the power, it will surely be granted, that it cannot be done without involving scenes of civil commotion, of a very serious nature.

Let the opponents of the proposed constitution in this State be asked, and it is a question they certainly ought to have asked themselves, what line of conduct they would advise to adopt, if nine other States, of which I think there is little doubt, should accede to the constitution. Would they recommend, that it should stand single? Will they connect it with Rhode Island? Or even with two others checkerwise, and remain with them, as outcasts from the society, to shift for themselves? Or will they return to their dependence on Great Britain? Or, lastly,

have the mortification to come in when they will be allowed no credit for doing so?

The warmest friends and the best supporters the constitution has, do not contend that it is free from imperfections; but they found them unavoidable, and are sensible, if evil is likely to arise therefrom, the remedy must come hereafter; for in the present moment it is not to be obtained; and, as there is a constitutional door open for it, I think the people (for it is with them to judge), can, as they will have the advantage of experience on their side, decide with as much propriety on the alterations and amendments which are necessary, as ourselves. I do not think we are more inspired, have more wisdom, or possess more virtue, than those who will come after us.

The power under the constitution will always be in the people. It is intrusted for certain defined purposes, and for a certain limited period, to representatives of their own choosing; and, whenever it is executed contrary to their interest, or not agreeable to their wishes, their servants can and undoubtedly will be recalled. It is agreed on all hands, that no government can be well administered without powers; yet, the instant these are delegated, although those, who are intrusted with the administration, are no more than the creatures of the people, act as it were but for a day, and are amenable for every false step they take, they are, from the moment they receive it, set down as tyrants; their natures, they would conceive from this, immediately changed, and that they can have no other disposition but to op-

press. Of these things, in a government constituted and guarded as *ours* is, I have no idea; and do firmly believe, that, whilst many *ostensible* reasons are assigned to prevent the adoption of it, the real ones are concealed behind the curtains, because they are not of a nature to appear in open day. I believe further, supposing them pure, that as great evils result from too great jealousy as from the want of it. We need look, I think, no further for proof of this, than to the constitution of some, if not all, of these States. No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints and wholesome checks in every department of government, than I am; but I have never yet been able to discover the propriety of placing it absolutely out of the power of men to render essential services, because a possibility remains of their doing ill.

If Mr. Ronald can place the finances of this country upon so respectable a footing as he has intimated, he will deserve much of its thanks. In the attempt, my best wishes, I have nothing more to offer, will accompany him. I hope there remains virtue enough in the Assembly of this State to preserve inviolate public treaties and private contracts. If these are infringed, farewell to respectability and safety in the government.

I have possessed a doubt, but if any had existed in my breast, reiterated proofs would have convinced me of the impolicy of *all* commutable taxes. If we cannot learn wisdom from experience, it is hard to say where it is to be found. But why talk of learn-

ing it. These things are mere jobs, by which few are enriched at the public expense; for, whether premeditation or ignorance is the cause of this destructive scheme, it ends in oppression.

You have, I find, broke the ice. The only advice I will offer to you on the occasion (if you have a mind to command the attention of the House,) is to speak seldom, but to important subjects, except such as particularly relate to your constituents; and, in the former case, make yourself perfectly master of the subject. Never exceed a decent warmth, and submit your sentiments with diffidence. A dictatorial stile, though it may carry conviction, is always accompanied with disgust. I am, &c.

TO THOMAS JOHNSON.

SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 22 November, 1787.

The lettter with which you have been pleased to honor me, dated the 16th inst., came to my hand the day before yesterday. By to-morrow's Post this answer will be forwarded to you.

Mr. Rumsey has given you an uncandid account of his explanation to me of the principle on which his boat was to be propelled against stream. At the time he exhibited his model and obtained certificate, I have no reason to believe that the use of steam was contemplated by him, sure I am it was not mentioned; and equally certain I am, that it would not apply to the project he *then* had in view; the first communication of which was made to me in Septem-

ber, 1784 (at the springs in Berkley). The Novr. following, being in Richmond, I met Mr. Rumsey there who was at that time applying to the Assembly for a exclusive Act. He then spoke of the effect of steam and the conviction he was under of the usefulness of its application for inland navigation; but I did not then conceive, nor have I done so at any moment since, that it was suggested as a part of his original plan, but rather as the ebullition of his genius.

It is proper, however, for me to add that some time *after this* Mr. Fitch called upon me on his way to Richmond, and explaining his scheme, wanted a letter from me, introductory of it to the Assembly of this State, the giving of which I declined; and went on to inform him, that tho' I was bound not to disclose the principles of Mr. Rumsey's discovery, I could venture to assure him that the thought of applying steam for the purpose he mentioned was not original, but had been mentioned to me by Mr. Rumsey—this I thought myself obliged to say, that whichever (if either) of them was the discoverer might derive the benefit of the invention. To the best of my recollection of what passed between Mr. Rumsey and me, the foregoing is an impartial recital. * * *

TO DAVID STUART.

MOUNT VERNON, 30 November, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 14th came duly to hand. I am sorry to find by it, that the opposition gains strength. I do not wonder much at this. The adversaries to a

measure are generally, if not always, more violent and active than the advocates, and frequently employ means, which the others do not, to accomplish their ends.

I have seen no publication yet, that ought in my judgment to shake the proposed constitution in the mind of an impartial and candid public. In fine, I have hardly seen one, that is not addressed to the passions of the people, and obviously calculated to alarm their fears. Every attempt to amend the constitution at this time is in my opinion idle and vain. If there are characters, who prefer disunion, or separate confederacies, to the general government, which is offered to them, their opposition may, for aught I know, proceed from principle; but, as nothing, according to my conception of the matter, is more to be deprecated than a disunion or these distinct confederacies, as far as my voice can go it shall be offered in favor of the latter. That there are some writers, and others perhaps who may not have written, that wish to see this union divided into several confederacies, is pretty evident. As an antidote to these opinions, and in order to investigate the ground of objections to the constitution which is submitted, the *Federalist*, under the signature of PUBLIUS, is written. The numbers, which have been published, I send you. If there is a printer in Richmond, who is really well disposed to support the new constitution, he would do well to give them a place in his paper. They are, I think I may venture to say, written by able men; and before they are finished will, or I am mistaken, place matters in a true

point of light. Although I am acquainted with the writers, who have a hand in this work, I am not at liberty to mention names, nor would I have it known, that they are sent by *me* to *you* for promulgation.[1]

You will recollect, that the business of the Potomac Company is withheld from the Assembly of Maryland until it is acted upon in this State; that the sitting of that Assembly is expected to be short; and that our operations may be suspended, if there is no other recourse to be had than to common law process to obtain the dividends, which are called for by the directors and not paid by the subscribers.

Certificate and commutable taxes I hope will be done away,[2] and that the Assembly will not interfere

[1] "Pray, if it is not a secret, who is the author or authors of Publius?" *Washington to Knox*, 5 February, 1788.

October 30th, Hamilton sent to Washington the first number of the *Federalist*, without any intimation as to the authorship. "For the remaining numbers of PUBLIUS," wrote Washington in reply, "I shall acknowledge myself obliged, as I am persuaded the subject will be well handled by the author of them." November 18th, Madison sent him seven numbers, suggesting that they be republished in Virginia, and saying that his own *degree* of connection with the publication was such as to "afford a restraint of delicacy from interesting myself directly in the republication elsewhere. You will recognize one of the pens concerned in the task. There are three in the whole. A fourth may possibly bear a part."

[2] Various methods were devised for raising taxes by receiving substitutes for specie. The tax for satisfying the requisitions of Congress was allowed to be paid in part by certificates, or evidences of claims on the government, which had been given during the war. The different States had borrowed money, and issued loan-office certificates, which bore interest. Warrants were granted from time to time for the interest on such certificates. The State of Virginia had passed a law, authorizing these warrants to be received into the treasury in payment of certain kinds of taxes.—Hening's *Statutes*, vol. xii., p. 95. Tobacco was also received for taxes.—*Ib.*, p. 455. And there was a strong wish, on the part of some, that other articles of produce should be receivable for the same purpose, leaving it to the State to dispose of such commodities, and convert them into specie. Taxes thus paid were called *commutable*.

either with public treaties or private contracts. Bad indeed must the situation of that country be, when this is the case. With great pleasure I received the information respecting the commencement of my nephew's political course. I hope he will not be so buoyed by the favorable impression it has made, as to become a babbler. If the convention was such a tumultuous and disorderly body as a certain gentleman has represented, [it was due] in a great measure, to a few dissatisfied characters who would not submit to the decisions of a majority thereof. * * *

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 7 December, 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

Since my last to you, I have been favored with your letters of the 28th of October and 18th of November. With the last came seven numbers of the *Federalist*, under the signature of PUBLIUS, for which I thank you. They are forwarded to a gentleman in Richmond for republication; the doing of which in this State will, I am persuaded, have a good effect, as there are certainly characters, who are no friends to a general government; perhaps I should not go too far was I to add, who have no great objection to the introduction of anarchy and confusion.

The solicitude to discover what the several State legislatures would do with the constitution is now

transferred to the several conventions; the decisions of which, being more interesting and conclusive, is consequently more anxiously expected than the other. What Pennsylvania and Delaware have done, or will do, must soon be known. Other conventions to the northward and eastward of them are treading closely on their heels; but what the three southern States have done, or in what light the new constitution is viewed by them, I have not been able to learn. North Carolina, it has been said, "by some accounts from Richmond," will be governed in a great measure by the conduct of Virginia. The pride of South Carolina will not, I conceive, suffer this influence to work in her councils; and the disturbances in Georgia will, or I am mistaken, show the people of it the propriety of being united, and the necessity there is for a general government. If these, with the States eastward and northward of us, should accede to the federal government, I think the citizens of this State will have no cause to bless the opposers of it here, if they should carry their point. A paragraph in the Baltimore paper has announced a change in the sentiments of Mr. Jay on this subject, and adds, that, from being an admirer of the new form, he has become a bitter enemy to it. This relation, without knowing Mr. Jay's opinion, I discredit, from a conviction, that he would consider the matter well before he would pass any judgment, and having done so would not change his opinion almost in the same breath.—I am anxious however to know on what ground this report originates, especially the indelicacy of the expression. It

is very unlikely, therefore, that a man of his knowledge and foresight should turn on both sides of a question in so short a space.[1]

It would have given me great pleasure to have complied with your request in behalf of your foreign acquaintance. *At present* I am unable to do it. The survey of the county between the Eastern and Western waters is not yet reported by the Commissioners—tho' promised to be made very shortly—the survey being completed. No draught that can convey an adequate idea of the work on this river, has been yet taken. Much of the labor except at the great falls has been bestowed in the bed of the river in a removal of the rocks and deepening the water at the great falls—the labor has indeed been great. The water there (a sufficiency I mean) is taken into a canal about 200 yards above the cataract, and conveyed by a level cut (thro' a solid rock in some places and much stone everywhere) more than a mile to the lock seats, five in number, by means of which, when completed the craft will be let into the river below the falls (which together amount to 76 feet). At the Seneca falls, six miles above the great falls, a channel which has been formed by the river when inundated, is under improvement for the navigation. The same in part at Shannondoah—At the lower falls where

[1] "I thank you for your obliging letter, enclosing a paragraph respecting me in Mr. Oswald's paper. You have my authority to deny the charge of the sentiments it imputes to me, and to declare, that in my opinion it is advisable for the people of America to adopt the constitution proposed by the late convention. If you should think it expedient to publish this letter, I have no objection to its being done."—*Jay to John Vaughan*, 1 December, 1787.

nothing has yet been done, a level cut and locks are proposed. These constitute the principal difficulties and will be the great expense of this undertaking— the parts of the river between requiring loose stones only to be removed in order to deepen the water where it is too shallow in dry season.

P. S. Since writing the foregoing, I have received a letter from a member "of the Assembly" in Richmond, dated the 4th instant, giving the following information :—

"I am sorry to inform you, that the constitution has lost ground so considerably, that it is doubted whether it has any longer a majority in its favor. From a vote, which took place the other day, this would appear certain, though I cannot think it so decisive as the enemies to it consider it. It marks, however, the inconsistency of some of its opponents. At the time the resolutions calling a convention were entered into, Colonel M. sided with the friends to the constitution, and opposed any hint being given, expressive of the sentiments of the House as to amendments. But, as it was unfortunately omitted at that time to make provision for the subsistence of the convention, it became necessary, to pass some resolution providing for any expense, which may attend an attempt to make amendments. As M. had on the former occasion declared, that it would be improper to make any discovery of the sentiments of the House on the subject, and that we had no right to suggest any thing to a body paramount to us, his advocating such a resolution was matter of astonishment. It is true, he declared it was not declaratory of our opinion ; but the contrary must be very obvious. As I have heard many declare themselves friends to the constitution since the vote, I do not consider it as altogether decisive of the opinion of the House with respect to it.

"I am informed, both by General Wilkinson, who is just arrived here from New Orleans by way of North Carolina, and Mr. Ross, that North Carolina is almost unanimous for adopting it.

The latter received a letter from a member of that Assembly now sitting.

"In a debating society here, which meets once a week, this subject has been canvassed at two successive meetings, and is to be finally decided on to-morrow evening. As the whole Assembly, almost, has attended on these occasions, their opinion will then be pretty well ascertained; and, as the opinion on this occasion will have much influence, some of Colonel Innis's friends have obtained a promise from him to enter the lists.

"The bill respecting British debts has passed our House, but with such a clause as I think makes it worse than a rejection."

The letter, of which I enclose you a printed copy, from Colonel R. H. Lee to the Governor, has been circulated with great industry in manuscript four weeks before it went to press, and is said to have had a bad influence.[1] The enemies to the constitution leave no stone unturned to increase the opposition to it. I am, &c.

TO COLONEL THOMAS LEWIS.

MOUNT VERNON, 25 December, 1787.

SIR,

It is my desire and I am told that it is the wish of many—and sure I am policy requires it—that the uncultivated tracts of land on the Great Kanhawa and Ohio belonging to the Military should be settled. The difficulty with me respecting mine has been, how to draw the line of mutual advantage for Landlord and Tenant, with respect to the terms; and where to find

[1] This letter contained a series of objections to the constitution, as reported by the convention. It was circulated widely in the newspapers. Lee afterwards wrote a series of letters, over the signature "Federal Farmer," which had great popularity, many thousands being printed and sold in the States.

a confidential person on or near the spot who would act for me as Agent.

Two reasons, hitherto, have restrained me from making application to you, on this head—first, the uncertainty I was under of your having become an actual resident in those parts—and second a doubt whether it might be agreeable to you to accept this trust on account of the trouble, and little profit that would derive from the agency, at least for some time.

The first cause being removed (having understood, by means of some members in Assembly that you live at Point Pleasant) I shall take the liberty of trying you on the second; under a hope, that more from the desire of seeing the country settled the neighborhood strengthened and property thereby secured; and the value of it increased; than from any pecuniary considerations at the present moment, you may be induced to aid me in seating my lands on the great Kanhawa and on the Ohio between the mouths of the two Rivers bearing that name.

If you accept the trust this letter shall be your authority—fully—and amply given and binding upon me and my heirs for the following purposes.—

First. To place as many Tenants on the several tracts of Lands (Plats of which with my signature annexed to them shall accompany this Power) as you can obtain consistently with your judgment, and suggestions hereafter mentioned.

Second. That an exemption from the payment of Rents for the term of three years shall be allowed them provided certain reasonable improvements such

as you shall stipulate for,—and which I think (but leave the matter to you) ought to be comfortable houses,—Acres of Arable—and—Acres of Meadow land, and a certain number of frute Trees planted.

Third. That for the fourth year, rents shall become due, and shall consist (as I am told the custom of the Country is) of a third of whatever is raised on the premises, which rents shall be annually paid thereafter to you, or my agent for the time being in that Country.—

Fourth. That under this tenure they may be assured of the places (if they incline to remain, and will go on to improve them) for the term of—years; were these not to exceed ten, it would be more pleasing to me than any extension beyond that number; but if this limitation will not be acceded to on the part of the tenant, I must leave it to your discretion to augment them making the term definite, and not for lives, which is not only uncertain, but often introductory of disputes to ascertain the termination of them—Instances of which have happened to me. All mines and minerals will be reserved for the landlord, —and where there are valuable streams for water works, the Rents must bear some proportion to the advantages which are likely to result from them.—

Fifth. Whether custom authorizes, or justice requires that the tenant should pay the land tax of what he agrees to hold before the rent becomes due; or afterwards, in whole, or part, must be governed by the practice which prevails and consequently is left to your decision.

Sixth. I do not conceive it necessary nor should I incline to go into much, or indeed any expense in laying the Land off into Lots till it begins to be thick settled and productive. The first comers will of course have the first choice—but they and all others are to be informed that their lotts (be the quantity little or much) will be bounded by water courses, or (where this is not the case) by convenient and regular forms.—And as most of my Tracts (as you will see by the plats) have extensive boundaries on the rivers running but a little ways back it is my wish, indeed it naturally follows, that back part of the land should be considered as the support of that which will be first settled and cleared on the margins of the Rivers and a sufficiency of it reserved for that purpose.

Seventh. For your trouble in negotiating this business, I am very willing to allow the usual Commission for collecting—converting into cash and transmitting to me, the rents after they shall commence and whatever you may think proper to charge me (in reason) for your trouble till this shall happen, —I will cheerfully agree to pay.

Whether you accept this trust or not, you will do me a favor in the communication of your sentiments on the subject. There are two ways by which letters will come safe.—Viz—thrown into the Post Office at Philadelphia or into that at Richmond.—Colo. Bayard an acquaintance of mine, or any acquaintance you may have at Fort Pitt, will forward them to the first place—and the means of doing it to the latter

you must be a better judge of than myself—If the letters once get into the Post Office, I shall be sure of them.—On private conveyances there is no reliance—they are tossed about and neglected so as rarely to reach their intended destination when sent in this manner.

If you should incline to act under this power your own good sense and judgment will at once dictate the propriety, indeed necessity of promulgating it as extensively as you can by Advertisements to those parts from whence settlers are most likely to be drawn over and above the opportunities which your situation gives you of communicating the matter to travellers by water on the Ohio.

On the other hand, if you do not incline to act I would thank you for returning me the papers herewith enclosed as it will save me the trouble of making other copies.

Whether the improvements which I had made on the Lands (of which you have herewith the draughts) in the years 1774 and 5 will be of use to Settlers at this day, or not, you who are on the spot can best determine—They cost me, or were valued to between £1500 and 2000.—If they are useful the exemption from rent should be shorter—I thought it necessary to bring the matter into view tho' my expectations from it are small. I am, &c—

P. S. I have a small tract called the round bottom containing abt. 600 Acres, which I would also let.—It lyes on the Ohio, opposite to pipe Creek, and a little above Capteening.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 January, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

I have received your favor of the 14th of August, and am sorry that it is not in my power to give any further information relative to the practicability of opening a communication between Lake Erie and the Ohio, than you are already possessed of. I have made frequent inquiries since the time of your writing at Annapolis, but could never collect any thing that was decided or satisfactory. I have again renewed them, and flatter myself with better prospects.

The accounts generally agree as to its being a flat country between the waters of Lake Erie and Big Beaver, but differ very much with respect to the distance between their sources, their navigation, and the inconveniences which would attend the cutting a canal between them. From the best information I have been able to obtain of that country, the sources of the Muskingum and Cayahoga approach nearer to each other than Big Beaver; but a communication through the Muskingum would be more circuitous and difficult, having the Ohio in a greater extent to ascend, unless the latter could be avoided by opening a communication between James River and the Great Kanhawa, or between the Little Kanhawa and the west branch of the Monongahela, which is said to be very practicable by a short portage. As a testimony thereof, a road is now opened, or opening, under the authority and at the expense of the States of Virginia and Maryland, from the North Branch of

Potomac, "commencing at the mouth of Savage River," to Cheat River; and continued from thence to the navigable water of the Little Kanhawa, at the cost of the former.

The distance between Lake Erie and the Ohio through the Big Beaver is however so much less than the route through the Muskingum, that it would in my opinion operate very strongly in favor of opening a canal between the sources of the nearest water of the Lake and Big Beaver, although the distance between them should be much greater, and the operation more difficult, than to the Muskingum, as it is the direct line to the nearest shipping port on the Atlantic. I shall omit no opportunity of gaining every information relative to this important subject, and with pleasure communicate to you whatever may be worthy of your attention.[1]

I did myself the honor to forward to you the plan of government formed by the convention, as soon as that body rose; but was not a little disappointed, and mortified indeed, (as I wished to make the first offering of it to you,) to find by a letter dated the 9th of November in New York from Commodore Jones, that it was at that time in his possession. You have undoubtedly received it, or some other, ere now, and formed an opinion upon it. The public attention is at present wholly engrossed by this important subject. The legislatures of those States (Rhode Island excepted), which have met since the

[1] A letter of inquiry to Richard Butler is printed in Sparks, ix., 301; and another to William Irvine, ix., 326.

constitution has been formed, have readily assented to its being submitted to a convention chosen by the people. Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, are the only States whose conventions have as yet decided upon it. In the former it was adopted by forty-six to twenty-three, and in the two latter unanimously.

Connecticut and Massachusetts are to hold their conventions on the first and second Tuesdays of this month; Maryland in April, Virginia in June; and upon the whole it appears, so far as I have had an opportunity of learning the opinions of the people in the several States, that it will be received. There will undoubtedly be more or less opposition to its being adopted in most of the States, and in none a more formidable one than in this, as many influential characters here have taken a decided part against it, among whom are Mr. Henry, Colonel Mason, Governor Randolph, and Mr. Richard Henry Lee; but from every information, which I have been able to obtain, I think there will be a majority in its favor, notwithstanding their dissention. In New York a considerable opposition will also be given.

I am much obliged to you, my dear Sir, for the account which you gave me of the general state of affairs in Europe. I am glad to hear, that the *Assemblée des Notables* has been productive of good in France. The abuse of the finances, being disclosed to the King and the nation, must open their eyes, and lead to the adoption of such measures as will prove beneficial to them in future. From the

public papers it appears, that the parliaments of the several provinces, and particularly that of Paris, have acted with great spirit and resolution. Indeed, the rights of mankind, the privileges of the people, and the true principles of liberty, seem to have been more generally discussed and better understood throughout Europe since the American revolution, than they were at any former period.

Although the finances of France and England were such, as led you to suppose at the time you wrote to me, yet, if we credit the concurrent accounts from every quarter, there is little doubt but that they have commenced hostilities before this. Russia and the Porte have formally begun the contest, and from appearances, (as given to us,) it is not improbable but that a general war will be kindled in Europe. Should this be the case, we shall feel more than ever the want of an efficient general government to regulate our commercial concerns, to give us a national respectability, and to connect the political views and interests of the several States under one head in such a manner, as will effectually prevent them from forming separate, improper, or indeed any connexion with the European powers, which can involve them in their political disputes.[1] For our situation is such, as makes it not only unnecessary, but extremely im-

[1] "Whether war or peace will be the issue of the dispute between France and England, seems as yet undecided. If the former, we shall certainly get involved, unless there is energy enough in Government to restrain our people within proper bounds; and that the power of the present government is inadequate to accomplish this, I believe none will deny."—*Washington to Knox*, 10 January, 1788.

prudent, for us to take a part in their quarrels; and whenever a contest happens among them, if we wisely and properly improve the advantages, which nature has given us, we may be benefited by their folly, provided we conduct ourselves with circumspection and under proper restrictions; for I perfectly agree with you, that an extensive speculation, a spirit of gambling, or the introduction of any thing, which will divert our attention from agriculture, must be extremely prejudicial if not ruinous to us. But I conceive, under an energetic general government, such regulations might be made, and such measures taken, as would render this country the asylum of pacific and industrious characters from all parts of Europe, would encourage the cultivation of the earth by the high price, which its products would command, and would draw the wealth and wealthy men of other nations into our bosom, by giving security to property and liberty to its holders.

I have the honor to be, &c.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

MOUNT VERNON, 8 January, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

The letter, which you did me the honor of writing to me on the 27th ultimo, with the enclosure,[1] came duly to hand. I receive them as a fresh instance of your friendship and attention. For both I thank you.

[1] Containing his objections to the new constitution.

The diversity of sentiments upon the important matter, which has been submitted to the people, was as much expected as it is regretted by me. The various passions and *motives*, by which men are influenced, are concomitants of fallibility, engrafted into our nature for the purposes of unerring wisdom; but, had I entertained a latent hope, (at the time you moved to have the constitution submitted to a second convention,) that a more perfect form would be agreed to, in a word, that any constitution would be adopted under the impressions and instructions of the members, the publications, which have taken place since, would have eradicated every form of it. How do the sentiments of the influential characters in this State, who are opposed to the constitution, and have favored the public with their opinions, quadrate with each other? Are they not at variance on some of the most important points? If the opponents in the *same* State cannot agree in their principles, what prospect is there of a coalescence with the advocates of the measure, when the different views and jarring interests of so wide and extended an empire are to be brought forward and combated?

To my judgment it is more clear than ever, that an attempt to amend the constitution, which is submitted, would be productive of more heat and greater confusion than can well be conceived. There are some things in the new form, I will readily acknowledge, which never did, and I am persuaded never will, obtain my cordial approbation; but I then did conceive, and do now most firmly believe, that in the aggregate it is

the best constitution, that can be obtained at this epoch, and that this, or a dissolution of the Union, awaits our choice, and are the only alternatives before us. Thus believing, I had not, nor have I now, any hesitation in deciding on which to lean.

I pray your forgiveness for the expression of these sentiments. In acknowledging the receipt of your letter on this subject, it was hardly to be avoided, although I am well-disposed to let the matter rest entirely on its own merits, and men's minds to their own workings. With very great esteem and regard I am, &c.

TO COLONEL FREDERICK WEISSENFELS.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 January, 1788.

SIR :

I have received your letter of the 10th of December. In answer to that, as well as those which you wrote to me in June last, I am sorry to inform you that I cannot, with any propriety, make application to Congress, had [it] the offices to bestow, or any other publick body in your behalf, for an appointment; because it would be acting directly contrary to a resolution which I made, when I quitted the publick service, not to make application for, or interfere with appointments of any kind.

It is a matter of regret as well as surprize that you should apply to me in an affair of this nature, in preference to those persons among whom you live and have been more immediately employ'd, and who must from their long acquaintance with you, have a much

better knowledge of your merits and sufferings than I can be supposed to have. If you expect relief from the Cincinnati, it is to the State Society you must look for it, or apply to the General-meeting, when convened, for I cannot, as an individual, transact any business of this kind relating to the Society. I am, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 January, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I stand indebted to you for your favors of the 20th and 26th ultimo, and I believe for that of the 14th also, and their enclosures. It does not appear to me, that there is any certain criterion in this State by which a decided judgment can be formed, as to the opinion entertained by its citizens with respect to the new constitution. My belief on this occasion is that whenever the matter is brought to a final decision, not only a majority, but a large one, will be found in its favor. That the opposition should have gained strength at Richmond, among the members of Assembly, is not, if true, to be wondered at, when we consider that the great adversaries to the constitution are all assembled at that place, acting conjointly, with the promulgated sentiments of Colonel Richard Henry Lee as auxiliary. It is said, however, and I believe it may be depended upon, that the latter, (though he may retain his sentiments,) has withdrawn, or means to withdraw, his opposition; because, as he has expressed himself, or as others have done

it for him, he finds himself in bad company such as with M[erce]r, Sm[i]th, &c, &c. His brother, Francis L. Lee, on whose judgment the family place much reliance, is decidedly in favor of the new form, under a conviction, that it is the best that can be obtained, and because it promises energy, stability, and that security, which is, or ought to be, the wish of every good citizen of the Union.

How far the determination of the question before the debating club, (mentioned to you in a former letter,) may be considered as auspicious of the final decision of the convention in this State, I will not prognosticate; but in this club the question, it seems, was determined by a very large majority in favor of the constitution. But of all arguments, that may be used at the convention, which is to be held for it, the most prevailing one I expect will be, that nine States *at least* will have acceded to it. And if the unanimity or majorities in those which follow, are equal to those which are passed, the force of them will prove irresistible. The governor has given his reasons to the public for withholding his signature; a copy of them I send you.

Our Assembly has been long in session, employed chiefly, as far as I can understand, in rectifying some of the mistakes of the last, and committing new ones for emendations at the next; yet, "Who so wise as we are?" We are held in painful suspense in regard to European matters. War, or peace, seems yet undecided, although the first is loudly talked of. I have no regular correspondent in Massachusetts;

otherwise, as an occasional matter, I should have had no objection to the communication of my sentiments to him, as they are unequivocal and decided. I am, &c.

P. S. I have this moment been informed, that the Assembly of North Carolina have postponed the meeting of the convention of that State until July. This seems to be calculated evidently for the purpose of taking the tone from Virginia. [1]

TO CHARLES CARTER.

MOUNT VERNON, 12 January, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

I find that an extract from my letter to you is running through all the newspapers, and published in that of Baltimore with the addition of my name. Although I have no disinclination to the promulgation of my sentiments on the proposed constitution, (not having concealed them on any occasion,) yet I must nevertheless confess, that it gives me pain to see the hasty and indigested production of a

[1] "From the States to the south of it [North Carolina], I have no information that can be relied on, except that Georgia in appointing a convention have accompanied the act with powers to alter or amend the Federal Constitution. But if a weak State, with the Indians on its back and the Spaniards on its flank, do not see the necessity of a General Government, there must, I think, be wickedness or insanity in the way. The unanimity and generosity with which the County of Philadelphia has been offered for the seat of the Fæderal government by the land holders thereof, gives much weight and merit to the invitation, and will probably be an inducement to others to follow the example." —*Washington to Samuel Powel*, 18 January, 1788. The Georgia convention assembled at Augusta on Christmas day, and on the 2d of January fully adopted the new constitution.

private letter handed to the public, to be animadverted upon by the adversaries of the new government.

Could I have supposed, that the contents of a private letter, (marked with evident haste,) would have composed a newspaper paragraph, I certainly should have taken some pains to dress the sentiments (to whom known is indifferent to me) in less exceptionable language, and would have assigned some reasons in support of my opinion, and the charges against others. I am persuaded your intentions were good; but I am not less persuaded, that you have provided food for strictures and criticisms. Be this however as it may, it shall pass off unnoticed by me, as I have no inclination and still less abilities for scribbling. With very great esteem and regard, I am, &c.[1]

[1] It appeared afterwards, that a copy of the letter had been taken and sent to press without Mr. Carfer's knowledge. The paragraph referred to was the following:

"I thank you for your congratulations on my return from the Convention, and with what you add respecting the Constitution. My decided opinion of the matter is that there is no alternative between the adoption of it and anarchy.—If one State, however important it may conceive itself to be, should suppose, or a minority of the States, that they can dictate a Constitution to the majority, unless they have the power of administring to good effect, administring the ultima ratio, they will find themselves deceived. All the opposition to it that I have yet seen, is, I must confess, addressed more to the passions than to the reason—and clear I am if another Federal Convention is attempted, the sentiment of the members will be more discordant or less conciliatory than the last—in fine—that they will agree upon no general plan. General government is now suspended by a thread, I might go farther, and say, it is really at an end; and what will be the consequence of a fruitless attempt to amend the one which is offered, before it is tried—or of the delay from the attempt does not in my judgment need the gift of prophecy to predict. I am not a blind admirer (for I saw the imperfections) of the Constitu-

TO JONATHAN TRUMBULL.

MOUNT VERNON, 5 February, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I thank you for your obliging favor of the 9th ulto. which came duly to hand, and congratulate with you on the adoption of the new Constitution in your State by so decided a majority and so many respectable Characters. I wish for the same good tidings from Massachusetts but the accounts from thence are not so favorable—The decision, it is even said, is problematical, arising, as I believe 9/10ths of the opposition does, from local circumstance and sinister views. The result of the deliberations in that State will have considerable influence on those

tion to which I have assisted to give birth; but I am fully persuaded it is the best that can be obtained at this day, and that it or disunion, is before us. If the first is our choice, when the defects of it are experienced, a constitutional door is open for amendments and may be adopted in a peaceable manner without tumult or disorder."—*Washington to Charles Carter*, 14 December, 1787.

"You have undoubtedly seen my sentiments upon the Constitution in an extract of a letter written by me to a Gentleman in Fredericksburg, which I find has circulated pretty generally through the papers;—I had not the most distant idea of its ever appearing before the publick, for altho' I have not the least wish or desire to conceal my sentiments upon the subject from any person living, yet, as the letter containing the paragraph alluded to was written upon several other matters quite foreign to this & intended only for that Gentleman's own inspection, I did not attend to the manner of expressing my ideas, or dress them in the language I should have done, if I had the smallest suspicion of them ever coming to the public eye through that channel."—*Washington to Lincoln*, 31 January, 1788.

"I cannot but think, on the whole, that it may have been of service, notwithstanding the scandalous misinterpretations of it which have been attempted. As it has evidently the air of a paragraph to a familiar friend, the omission of an argumentative support of the opinion given will appear to no candid reader unnatural or improper."—*Madison to Washington*, 20 February, 1788.

which are to follow—especially in that of New York where I fancy the opposition to the form will be greatest.[1]

Altho' an inhabitant of this State, I cannot speak with decision on the publick sentiment of it with respect to the proposed Constitution—my private opinion however of the matter is, that it will certainly be received, but in this opinion I may be mistaken.—I have not been ten miles from home since my return to it from Philadelphia—I see few who do not live within that circle, except Travellers and strangers and these form opinions upon too slight ground to be relied on. The opponents of the Constitution are indefatigable in fabricating and circulating papers, reports, &c. to its prejudice; whilst the friends *generally* content themselves with the goodness of the cause and the necessity for its adoption, supposing it wants no other support.

Mrs. Washington, and others of this family with whom you are acquainted (among which is Colo. Humphries) join me in every good wish for you, Mrs. Trumbull and family; and with sentiments of the sincerest regard and friendship, I am, &c.

[1] "I am very sorry to find that there is likely to be so powerful an opposition to the adoption of the proposed plan of government with you; and I am entirely of your opinion, that the business of the convention should be conducted with moderation, candor, and fairness, which are not incompatible with firmness. Although, as you justly observe, the friends of the new system may bear down the opposition, yet they would never be able, by precipitate or violent measures, to soothe and reconcile their minds to the exercise of the government, which is a matter that ought as much as possible to be kept in view, and temper their proceedings."—*Washington to Lincoln*, 31 January, 1788.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 5 February, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am indebted to you for several of your favors, and thank you for their enclosure. The rumor of war between France and England has subsided, and the poor patriots of Holland, it seems, are left to fight their own battles or negotiate, in either case with no great prospect of advantage. They must have been much deceived, or their conduct has been weak, and precipitate, and absurd. The former, however, I believe is the truth.

I am sorry to find by yours and other accounts from Massachusetts, that the decision of its convention, (at the time of their respective dates,) remained problematical.[1] A rejection of the new form by that State would invigorate the opposition, not only in

[1] "The intelligence from Massachusetts begins to be very ominous to the constitution. The antifederal party is reinforced by the insurgents, and by the Province of Maine, which apprehends greater obstacles to her scheme of a separate government from the new system, than may be otherwise experienced. And according to the prospect at the date of the latest letters, there was very great reason to fear, that the voice of that State would be in the negative. The operation of such an event on this State may easily be foreseen. Its legislature is now sitting, and is much divided. A majority of the Assembly are said to be friendly to the merits of the constitution. A majority of the senators actually convened are opposed to a submission of it to the convention. The arrival of the absent members will render the voice of that branch uncertain on the point of a convention. The decision of Massachusetts either way will involve the result in this State. The minority in Pennsylvania is very restless under their defeat. If they can get an Assembly to their wish, they will endeavour to undermine what has been done there. If backed by Massachusetts, they will probably be emboldened to make some more rash experiment. The information from Georgia continues to be favorable. The little we get from South Carolina is of the same complexion."—*Madison to Washington*, 20 January, 1788.

New York, but in all those which are to follow; at the same time this would afford materials for the minority, in such as have actually agreed to it, to blow the trumpet of discord more loudly. The acceptance by a bare majority, though preferable to a rejection, is also to be deprecated. It is scarcely possible to form any decided opinion of the general sentiment of the people of this State on this point. Many have asked me with anxious solicitude if you did not mean to get into the convention, conceiving it of indispensable necessity. Colonel Mason, who returned but yesterday, I am told has offered himself for Stafford county, and his friends say he can be elected not only in that, but in the counties of Prince William and Fauquier also. The truth of this I know not. I rarely go from home, and my visitors, who, for the most part are travellers and strangers, have not the best means of information.

At the time you suggested for my consideration the expediency of a communication of my sentiments to any correspondent I might have in Massachusetts on the proposed constitution, I did not recollect that General Lincoln and myself frequently interchanged letters; much less did I expect, that a hasty and indigested extract [from a letter] of which I had written, intermingled with a variety of other matters, to Colonel Charles Carter in answer to a letter I had received from him, on the subject of some experiments we had made in farming, wolves, wolf-dogs, sheep, and the Lord knows what else, was then in the press, and would bring them to public view by means of the general circulation I find that extract has had.

Although I never have concealed, and am perfectly regardless who becomes acquainted with my sentiments with respect to the proposed constitution, yet nevertheless, as no pains have been taken to dress the ideas, nor any reasons assigned in support of opinion, I feel myself hurt by the publication, and informed my friend the Colo. thereof. In answer, he has fully acquitted himself of the *intention;* but his zeal in the cause prompted him to distribute copies, (under a prohibition, which was disregarded,) that it should not go to the press. As you have seen the crude, or rude extract, as you may please to term it, I will add no more on the subject.

Perceiving that the *Federalist*, under the signature of PUBLIUS, is about to be republished, I would thank you for forwarding to me three or four copies, one of which to be bound, and inform me of the cost. Although we have not had many or deep snows, yet we have since the commencement of it, had a very severe winter, and if this day with you is as much keener than we now feel it, as the difference of latitude ought to make it, you will feel a comfortable fire no bad antidote against cold fingers and toes. I am, &c.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE.

MOUNT VERNON, 7 February, 1788.

SIR,

The Count de Moustier, your successor in office, hath forwarded from New York the letter, in which you did me the honor to bring me acquainted with the merits of that nobleman. Since it is the misfortune

of America not to be favored any longer with your residence, it was necessary, to diminish our regrets, that so worthy and respectable a character should be appointed your successor. I shall certainly be happy in cultivating his acquaintance and friendship. The citizens, from gratitude as well as from personal considerations, will, I am persuaded, treat him with the greatest respect. Congress, I doubt not, will by every means in their power desire to make his sojourn in the United States as agreeable as it possibly can be.

But, Sir, you may rest assured that your abilities and dispositions to serve this country were so well understood, and your services so properly appreciated, that the residence of no public minister will ever be longer remembered, or his absence more sincerely regretted. It will not be forgotten, that you were a witness to the dangers, the sufferings, the exertions, and the successes of the United States, from the most perilous crises to the hour of triumph. The influence of your agency on the cabinet to produce a coöperation, and the prowess of your countrymen coöperating with ours in the field to secure the liberties of America, have made such an indelible impression on the public mind, as will never be effaced. Wherever you may be, our best wishes will follow you. And such is our confidence in your disinterested friendship, that we are certain you will wish to be useful to us, in whatever mission you may be honored by your King. It has been surmised, on I know not what authority, that there was a probability of your being employed in the diplomatic corps at the court of Lon-

don. Should this be the case, your zeal may still find occasions of being serviceable to America, and profitable to your own country at the same time; for I conceive the commercial interests of the two nations are in many instances blended, and in opposition to those of Great Britain. * * *

I feel, Sir, not only for myself, but in behalf of my country, under great obligations for the affectionate wishes you have the goodness to make, with respect to the tranquillity and happiness of America. Separated as we are by a world of water from other nations, if we are wise, we shall surely avoid being drawn into the labyrinth of their politics, and involved in their destructive wars. * * *

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MOUNT VERNON, 7 February, 1788.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

You know it always gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear from you, and therefore I need only say, that your two kind letters of the 9th and 15th of October, so replete with personal affection and confidential intelligence, afforded me inexpressible satisfaction. I shall myself be happy in forming an acquaintance and cultivating a friendship with the new minister plenipotentiary of France, whom you have commended as a "sensible and honest man." These are qualities too rare and too precious not to merit one's particular esteem. You may be persuaded, that he will be well

received by the Congress of the United States, because they will not only be influenced in their conduct by his individual merits, but also by their affection for the nation, of whose sovereign he is the representative. For it is an undoubted fact, that the people of America entertain a grateful remembrance of past services, as well as a favorable disposition for commercial and friendly connexions with your nation.[1]

You appear to be, as might be expected from a real friend to this country, anxiously concerned about its present political situation. So far as I am able, I shall be happy in gratifying that friendly solicitude. As to my sentiments with respect to the merits of the new constitution, I will disclose them without reserve, (although by passing through the post-office they should become known to all the world,) for in truth I have nothing to conceal on that subject. It appears to me, then, little short of a miracle, that the delegates from so many different States (which States you know are also different from each other), in their manners, circumstances, and prejudices, should unite in forming a system of national

[1] "The fidelity, honor, and bravery of the troops of your nation, to which I have been a witness, the enlightened sentiments of patriotism, and the delicate feelings of friendship, which have actuated great numbers of your compatriots, with whom I may boast the happiness of being intimately connected, and above all, that lively interest, which your illustrious monarch and his faithful subjects took in the success of the American arms, and the confirmation of our independence, have endeared the national character to me, formed attachments and left impressions, which no distance, time, or contingency of events, can possibly remove. Though but a private citizen myself, and in a measure secluded from the world, I am conscious the assertion will be [well] founded, when I venture to affirm, that such are the feelings and such the affections of the American people."—*Washington to Count de Moustier*, 7 February, 1788.

government, so little liable to well-founded objections. Nor am I yet such an enthusiastic, partial, or undiscriminating admirer of it, as not to perceive it is tinctured with some real (though not radical) defects. The limits of a letter would not suffer me to go fully into an examination of them; nor would the discussion be entertaining or profitable. I therefore forbear to touch upon it. With regard to the two great points, (the pivots upon which the whole machine must move,) my creed is simply,

1st. That the general government is not invested with more powers, than are indispensably necessary to perform the functions of a good government; and consequently, that no objection ought to be made against the quantity of power delegated to it.

2ly. That these powers, (as the appointment of all rulers will for ever arise from, and at short, stated intervals recur to, the free suffrage of the people,) are so distributed among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, into which the general government is arranged, that it can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form, so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the people.

I would not be understood, my dear Marquis, to speak of consequences, which may be produced in the revolution of ages, by corruption of morals, profligacy of manners, and listlessness for the preservation of the natural and unalienable rights of mankind, nor of the successful usurpations, that may

be established at such an unpropitious juncture upon the ruins of liberty, however providently guarded and secured; as these are contingencies against which no human prudence can effectually provide. It will at least be a recommendation to the proposed constitution, that it is provided with more checks and barriers against the introduction of tyranny, and those of a nature less liable to be surmounted, than any government hitherto instituted among mortals hath possessed. We are not to expect perfection in this world; but mankind, in modern times, have apparently made some progress in the science of government. Should that, which is now offered to the people of America, be found on experiment less perfect than it can be made, a constitutional door is left open for its amelioration.

Some respectable characters have wished, that the States, after having pointed out whatever alterations and amendments may be judged necessary, would appoint another federal convention to modify it upon those documents. For myself, I have wondered, that sensible men should not see the impracticability of this scheme. The members would go fortified with such instructions, that nothing but discordant ideas could prevail. Had I but slightly suspected, at the time when the late convention was in session, that another convention would not be likely to agree upon a better form of government, I should now be confirmed in the fixed belief that they would not be able to agree upon any system whatever; so many, I may add, such contradictory and in my

opinion unfounded objections have been urged against the system in contemplation, many of which would operate equally against every efficient government that might be proposed. I will only add, as a further opinion founded on the maturest deliberation, that there is no alternative, no hope of alteration, no intermediate resting-place, between the adoption of this, and a recurrence to an unqualified state of anarchy, with all its deplorable consequences.

Since I had the pleasure of writing to you last, no material alteration in the political state of affairs has taken place to change the prospect of the constitution's being adopted by nine States or more. Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Connecticut, have already done it. It is also said Georgia has acceded. Massachusetts, which is perhaps thought to be rather more doubtful that when I last addressed you, is now in convention.

A spirit of emigration to the western country is very predominant. Congress have sold, in the year past, a pretty large quantity of land on the Ohio for public securities, and thereby diminished the domestic debt considerably. Many of your military acquaintances, such as the Generals Parsons, Varnum, and Putnam, the Colonels Tupper, Sprout, and Sherman, with many more, propose settling there. From such beginnings much may be expected.

The storm of war between England and your nation, it seems, is dissipated. I hope and trust the political affairs in France are taking a favorable turn. If the Turks will suffer themselves to

be precipitated into a war, they must abide the consequences. Some politicians speculate on a triple alliance between the two imperial courts and Versailles.

It gives me great pleasure to learn, that the present ministry of France are friendly to America, and that Mr. Jefferson and yourself have a prospect of accomplishing measures, which will mutually benefit and improve the commercial intercourse between the two nations. Every good wish attend you and yours. I am, &c.

TO ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD.

MOUNT VERNON, 13 February, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

* * * * * *

I think with you, that the life of a husbandman of all others is the most delectable. It is honorable, it is amusing, and, with judicious management, it is profitable. To see plants rise from the earth and flourish by the superior skill and bounty of the laborer fills a contemplative mind with ideas which are more easy to be conceived than expressed.

I am glad to find, that your first essay to raise Indian corn in drills has succeeded so much to your satisfaction; but I am inclined to think, unless restoratives were more abundant than they are to be found on common farms, that six feet by two will be too oppressive to your land. Experience has proved, that every soil will sink under the growth of this plant; whether from the luxuriancy and exhausting

quality of it, or the manner of tillage, or from both, is not *very* certain; because instead of two thousand four hundred and twenty plants, which stand on an acre at six feet square with two stalks in a hill, (as is usual in land of middling quality,) you have three thousand six hundred and thirty at six feet by two, single stalks. How far the exposing of land to the rays of the sun in summer is injurious, is a question yet more difficult to solve than the other. My own opinion of the matter is that it does; but this controverts the practice of summer fallows, which, (especially in heavy land,) some of the best practical farmers in England contend for as indispensably necessary, notwithstanding the doctrine of Mr. Young and many others, who are opposed to them.

The reason, however, which induced me to give my corn-rows the wide distance of ten feet, was not because I thought it essential to the growth of that plant, but because I introduced other plants between them. And this practice, from the experience of two years, one the wettest, and the other the driest that ever was felt on my estate, I am resolved to continue until the inutility of it, or something more advantageous, shall point out the expediency of a change. But I mean to practise it with variations, fixing on eight by two feet as the medium or standing distance, which will give more plants by three hundred to the acre, than six feet each way with two stalks in a hill will do.

As all my corn will be thus drilled, so between all I mean to put in drills also potatoes, carrots (as far as

my seed will go), and turnips, alternately, that not one sort more than another may have the advantage of soil, thereby to ascertain the comparative quantity and value of each of these plants as food for horses and stock of every kind. From the trials I have made, (under the disadvantages already mentioned,) I am well satisfied, that my crop of corn in this way will equal the yield of the same fields in the usual mode of cultivation, and that the quantity of potatoes, proportionate to the number of rows, will quadruple the corn. I entertain the same opinion with respect to carrots; but, being more unlucky in the latter, I cannot speak with so much confidence, and still less can I do it with respect to turnips.

From this husbandry, and statement of what I conceive to be facts, any given number of acres will yield as much corn in the *new*, as they will in the *old* way, and will moreover with *little* or *no* extra labor produce four times as many potatoes or carrots, which adds considerably to the profit from the field. But here it may be asked, If the land will sustain these crops, or rather the potatoes in addition to the corn? This is a question my own experience does not enable me to answer. The received opinion of many practical farmers in England is, that potatoes and carrots are ameliorators, not exhausters of the soil, preparing it well for other crops. But I do not scruple to confess, that, notwithstanding the profit which appears to result from the growth of corn and potatoes, or corn and carrots, or both thus blended, my wish is to exclude Indian corn altogether from my system of

cropping; but we are so habituated to the use of this grain, and it is so much better for negroes than any other, that it is not to be discarded; consequently to introduce it in the most profitable, or least injurious manner, ought to be the next consideration with the farmer.

To do this, some are of opinion that a small spot, set apart solely for the purpose, and kept highly manured, is the best method. And an instance in proof is adduced, of a gentleman near Baltimore, who for many years past from the same ground has not made less than ten barrels to the acre in drills, six feet apart, and, (if I recollect rightly,) eighteen inches in the rows. But query, where the farmer has no other resource than the manure of his own farm, will not his other crops be starved by this extra allowance to the Indian corn? I am inclined to think it will; and for that reason I shall try the intermixture of potatoes, carrots, and turnips, or either, as from practice shall be found most profitable, with my corn, which shall become a component part of some regular and systematic plan best adapted to the nature of my soil.

To societies, which have been formed for the encouragement of agriculture, is the perfection to which husbandry is now arrived in England indebted. Why then does not this country (Virginia I mean) follow so laudable and beneficial an example? And particularly why do not the gentlemen in the vicinity of Fredericksburg begin this work? Your lands are peculiarly well adapted to it. There are more of you in a small circle than I believe is to be found in the

same compass almost anywhere; and you are well able to afford experiments; from which, and not from theory, are individuals to derive useful knowledge, and the public a benefit. My love, to which Mrs. Washington's is joined, is presented to Mrs. Spotswood and I am, &c.

TO SAMUEL GRIFFIN.

SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 20 February, 1788.

I have been duly honored and greatly affected with the receipt of the resolution of the visitors and governors of William and Mary College, appointing me chancellor of the same, and have to thank you for your polite attention in the transmission. Not knowing particularly what duties, or whether any active services, are immediately expected from the person holding the office of chancellor, I have been greatly embarrassed in deciding upon the public answer proper to be given. It is for that reason I have chosen to explain in this private communication my situation and feelings, and to defer an ultimate decision until I shall have been favored with farther information on this subject.

My difficulties are briefly these. On the one hand, nothing in this world could be farther from my heart, than a want of respect for the worthy gentlemen in question, or a refusal of the appointment with which they have honored me, provided its duties are not incompatible with the mode of life to which I have entirely addicted myself; and, on the other hand, I would not for any consideration disappoint the just

expectations of the convocation by accepting an office, whose functions I previously knew, (from my preëngagements and occupations,) I should be absolutely unable to perform.

Although as I observed before, I know not specifically what those functions are, yet, Sir, I have conceived that a principal duty required of the chancellor might be a regular and indispensable visitation once, or perhaps twice, a year. Should this be expected, I must decline accepting the office. For, notwithstanding I most sincerely and ardently wish to afford whatever little influence I may possess, in patronizing the cause of science, I cannot, at my time of life and in my actual state of retirement, persuade myself to engage in new and extensive avocations.

Such being the *sentiments* of a heart unaccustomed to disguise, I flatter myself the candid manner in which I have explained them, cannot be displeasing to the convocation; and that the intervening delay between the *present*, and the *moment* in which I shall have the pleasure of receiving such ulterior explanations as may enable me to give a *definitive* answer, will not prove very detrimental to the collegiate interests. I am, &c.[1]

[1] Mr. Griffin sent to him an extract from the statute respecting the duties of the Chancellor, which runs thus: "The Chancellor is to be the Mæcenas, or patron of the college, such a one as by his favor with the King, and by his interest with all other persons in England, may be enabled to help on all the college affairs. His advice is to be taken, especially in all such arduous and momentous affairs, as the college shall have to do in England. If the college has any petitions at any time to the King, let them be presented by their Chancellor. If the college wants a new president, or professor, or master, let the college senate rely chiefly on his assistance, advice, and recommendation." Mr. Griffin added, that neither an oath nor personal attendance was necessary.

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 February, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your three letters of the 3d, 6th, and 9th instant. The information conveyed by the last was extremely pleasing to me, though I cannot say it was altogether unexpected, as the tenor of your former letters had, in some measure, prepared me for the event; but the conduct of the minority was more satisfactory than could have been expected.[1] The full and fair discussion, which you gave the subject in your convention, was attended

The Bishop of London had been the last Chancellor. Upon these facts Washington wrote to Mr Griffin, 30 April, 1788:

"Influenced by a heartfelt desire to promote the cause of science in general, and the prosperity of the College of William and Mary in particular, I accept the office of chancellor in the same; and request you will be pleased to give official notice thereof to the learned body, who have thought proper to honor me with the appointment. I confide fully in their strenuous endeavors for placing the system of education on such a basis, as will render it most beneficial to the State and the republic of letters, as well as to the more extensive interests of humanity and religion. In return, they will do me the justice to believe, that I shall not be tardy in giving my cheerful concurrence to such measures, as may be best calculated for the attainment of those desirable and important objects."

[1] The Massachusetts Convention closed its session 6 February, 1788, by adopting the Constitution. Washington had written to Lincoln on the 11th, before the news of the result had reached him:

"It is unhappy that a matter of such high importance cannot be discussed with that candor and moderation which would throw light on the subject, and place its merits in a proper point of view. But in an assembly so large as your convention must be, and composed of such various and opposite characters, it is almost impossible but that some things will occur which would rouse the passions of the most moderate man on earth."

Lincoln had written on the 9th:

"Considering the great disorders, which took place in this State the last winter, and considering the great influence, that the spirit which then reigned has had since upon all our operations, it may be supposed, that we have got through this business pretty well; and, considering also, that when we came together a very decided majority of the convention were against adopting the

with the happiest consequences. It afforded complete information to all those, who went thither with dispositions to be informed, and at the same time gave an opportunity to confute and point out the fallacy of those specious arguments, which were offered in opposition to the proposed government. Nor is this all. The conciliating behavior of the minority will strike a damp on the hopes, which opponents in other States might otherwise have formed from the smallness of the majority, and must be greatly influential in obtaining a favorable determination in those States, which have not yet decided upon it.[1]

constitution. Every exertion will be made to inform the people, and to quiet their minds. It is very fortunate for us, that the clergy are pretty generally with us. They have in this State a very great influence over the people, and they will contribute much to the general peace and happiness."

"The constitution has labored in Massachusetts exceedingly more than was expected. The opposition has not arisen from a consideration of the merits or demerits of the thing itself, as a political machine, but from a deadly principle levelled at the existence of all government whatever. The principle of insurgency expanded, deriving fresh strength and life from the impunity with which the rebellion of last year was suffered to escape. It is a singular circumstance that in Massachusetts the property, the ability, and the virtue of the State, are almost solely in favor of the constitution. Opposed to it are the late insurgents, and all those who abetted their designs, constituting four fifths of the opposition. A few, very few indeed, well-meaning people are joined to them. The friends of the constitution in that State, without overrating their own importance, conceive that the decision of Massachusetts would most probably settle the fate of the proposition. They therefore proceeded most cautiously and wisely, debated every objection with the most guarded good nature and candor, but took no questions on the several paragraphs, and thereby prevented the establishment of parties. This conduct has been attended with the most beneficial consequences. It is now no secret, that, on the opening of the convention, a majority were prejudiced against it."—*Knox to Washington*, 10 February, 1788.

[1] To Knox he wrote on 3 March, 1788, that the decision of Massachusetts would be "very influential on the equivocal States. . . . Candor and prudence, therefore, it is to be hoped will prevail; and yet I believe there are some characters among us, who would hazard every thing rather than cease

These is not perhaps a man in Virginia less qualified than I am to say, from his own knowledge and observation, what will be the fate of the constitution here; for I very seldom ride beyond the limits of my own farms, and am wholly indebted to those gentlemen who visit me for any information of the disposition of the people towards it; but from all I can collect, I have not the smallest doubt of its being accepted.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for the accounts which you have, from time to time, transmitted me since the meeting of your convention. Nothing could have been more grateful or acceptable to me. I am also obliged by your promise to inform me of any important matters, that may transpire; and you know I shall at all times be happy to hear of your welfare. Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments to Mrs. Lincoln and yourself. I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 2 March, 1788.

SIR,

The decision of Massachusetts, notwithstanding its concomitants,[1] is a severe stroke to the opponents of the proposed constitution in this State; and, with the favorable decision of those which have gone before it, and such as are likely to follow after, will have a

their opposition, or leave to the operation of the government the chance of proving the fallacy of their predictions of it, by which their sagacity and foresight might be impeached."

[1] The proposed amendments, which Madison thought were "a blemish, but are in the least offensive form."

powerful operation on the minds of men, who are not more influenced by passion, pique, and resentment, than they are by candor, moderation, and judgment. Of the former description, however, I am sorry to say there are too many; and among them *some*, who would hazard every thing rather than fail in their opposition, or have the sagacity of their prognostications impeached by the issue.

The determination you have come to, will give much pleasure to your friends.[1] From those in your county you will learn with more certainty, than from me, the expediency of your attending the election in it. With *some*, to have differed in sentiment is to have passed the Rubicon of their friendship, although you should go no further; with others, (for the honor of humanity,) I hope there is more liberality. But the consciousness of having discharged that duty, which we owe to our country, is superior to all other considerations, and will put these out of the question.

His Most Christian Majesty speaks and acts in a style not very pleasing to republican ears, or to republican forms; nor do I think it is altogether so to the temper of his own subjects at this day. Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth. The checks he endeavors to give it, however warranted by ancient usage, will more than probably kindle a flame, which may not be easily extinguished though it may be smothered for a while by the armies at his command and the nobility in his interest.

[1] A determination to allow his friends in Orange County, Virginia, to support his election as a delegate from that county to the State convention, which was to decide on the new constitution.

When a people are oppressed with taxes, and have a cause to believe that there has been a misapplication of the money, they illy brook the language of despotism. This, and the mortification, which the pride of the nation must have undergone with respect to the affairs of Holland, (if it is fair to judge from appearances,) may be productive of events, which prudence forbids one to mention.

To-morrow the elections for delegates to the State convention begin; and, as they will tread close upon the heels of each other, it will make an interesting and important month. With the most friendly sentiments and affectionate regard, I am. &c.[1]

TO SAMUEL HANSON, ESQ.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 March, 1788.

SIR,

Your letter of the 16th Inst. was handed me yesterday in Alexandria as I was going to dinner—pre-

[1] "At the end of the present month we shall be able to form a tolerable judgment of what may be its fate here; as our returns for the delegates to the convention will be known at that time, and the characters chosen will be pretty generally decided in their opinions upon the matter before their delegation, as that will determine the people in their choice. The general tenor of the information, which I derive from those gentlemen who call upon me, seems to agree in the opposition's losing ground, and that nothing is wanting to render the people so favorably disposed towards it, as to put the decision beyond a doubt, but a proper representation and information upon the subject. The opponents are indefatigable in their exertions, while the friends to the constitution seem to rest the issue upon the goodness of their cause. There will undoubtedly be a greater weight of abilities against the adoption in this convention than in any other. We had a right to expect it from the characters, who first declared against it here; but, notwithstanding this, my own opinion is, (as it has ever been,) that it will be received."—*Washington to Lincoln*, 10 March, 1788.

vious to that I had seen my nephew George Washington, and asked him if he had heard of any suitable place for himself and Lawrence to board at after their quarter with Mr. McWhir expired; he told me that it was probable a place might be obtained at a Mrs. Sandford's;—I desired him to inform himself of the terms, &c. and let me know them; as I had not an opportunity of seeing him again before I left town to know the result of his enquiries, it is not at this moment, in my power to give a decided answer to your offer of taking them again into your family.

Your candid and free communications respecting the conduct of my Nephews, while with you, meet my warmest approbation and deserve my best thanks, and I should think myself inexcusable, if, upon this occasion, I did not act a part equally open and candid, by informing you of general allegations which they have, from time to time, offered on their part, viz: They having been frequently detained from school in the morning beyond their proper hour, in consequence of not having their breakfast seasonably provided, and sometimes obliged to go to school without any.—They have likewise complained of their not being permitted to dine with company at the House, and served indifferently in another place afterwards, and, after being a short time with Mr. McWhir, they made application for shirts, and upon being asked what they had done with those which were made for them not long before, they replied that the manner of washing them at Mr. Hanson's (in Lye without soap) had entirely destroyed them.

This communication, Sir, cannot, I think, be displeasing to a person of your candor.—I do not state the above as *facts* but merely as the reports of the boys, and if they should live with you again it will undoubtedly have a good effect by shewing them that their reports will always be made known to you, and the truth or falsehood of them discovered.

The motive which first induced me to put the Boys with you, explained upon a former occasion, together with the advantage of throwing them into company, will still operate, and incline me to give a preference to your House upon terms nearly equal in other respects but I cannot decide upon the matter till I know the result of George's enquiries, and so soon as I do, you may depend upon hearing further from Sir, &c.

TO THE COUNT DE MOUSTIER.

MOUNT VERNON, 26 March, 1788.

SIR,

I have received the letter, which your Excellency did me the honor of addressing to me by the hand of Mr. Madison. While I am highly gratified with the justice you do me in appreciating the friendly sentiments I entertain for the French nation, I cannot avoid being equally astonished and mortified in learning, that you have met with any subject of discontent or inquietude since your arrival in America.[1] Be assured, Sir, as nothing could have been more unex-

[1] The French minister had fancied himself neglected in certain points of etiquette, in which his rank as a public functionary was not recognised in such a manner as he expected.

pected, so nothing can now give me greater pleasure, than to be instrumental in removing, as far as may be in the power of a private citizen as I am, every occasion of uneasiness that may have occurred. I have even hoped, from the short time of your residence here, and the partial acquaintance you may have had with the characters of the persons, that a natural distance in behavior and reserve in address may have appeared as intentional coldness and neglect. I am sensible that the apology itself, though it should be well founded, would be but an indifferent one, yet it will be better than none, while it served to prove, that it is our misfortune not to have the same cheerfulness in appearance and facility in deportment, which some nations possess, and this I believe in a certain degree to be the real fact; and that such a reception is sometimes given by individuals, as may affect a foreigner with very disagreeable sensations, when not the least shadow of an affront is intended.

As I know the predilections of most of our leading characters for your nation; as I had seen the clearest proofs of affection for your King given by the people of this country, on the birth of the Dauphin; as I had heard before the receipt of your letter, that you had been received at your public audience by Congress with all the marks of attention, which had ever been bestowed upon a representative of any sovereign power; and as I found that your personal character stood in the fairest point of light; I must confess I could not have conceived, that there was one person in public office in the United states capable of having

treated with indifference, much less with indignity, the representative from a court, with which we have ever been upon the most friendly terms. And confident I am, that it is only necessary for such conduct to be known to be detested.

But in the mean [time,] so ardently do I wish to efface any ill impressions, which may have been made upon your Excellency's mind to the prejudice of the public by individuals, that I must again repeat, that I am egregiously deceived if the people of this country are not in general extremely well effected to France. The prejudices against that kingdom had been so riveted by our English connexion and English policy, that it was some time before our people could get entirely the better of them. This, however, was thoroughly accomplished in the course of the war. And I may venture to say, that a greater revolution never took place in the sentiments of our people respecting another. Now, as none of their former attachments have been revived for Britain, and as no subject of uneasiness has turned up with respect to France, any disgust or enmity to the latter would involve a mystery beyond my comprehension. For I had always believed, that some apparent cause, powerful in its nature and progressive in its operation, must be employed to produce a change in national sentiments. But no prejudice has been revived, no jealousy excited (to my knowledge,) which could have wrought a revolution unfriendly to your nation. If one or a few persons in New York have given a different specimen of thinking and acting, I rely too much upon your candor to

apprehend, that you will impute it to the American people at large.

I am happy to learn, that your Excellency is meditating to strengthen the commercial ties that connect the two nations, and that your ideas of effecting it, by placing the arrangement upon the basis of mutual advantages, coincide exactly with my own. Treaties, which are not built upon reciprocal benefits, are not likely to be of long duration. Warmly as I wish to second your views, it is a subject of regret, that my little acquaintance with commercial affairs, and my seclusion from public life, have not put me in a state of preparation to answer your several questions with accuracy. I will endeavor to inform myself of the most interesting particulars, and shall take a pleasure in communicating the result.

At present I can only remark, that I think the taste for many articles of French merchandise is rather increasing. Still there are three circumstances, which are thought to give the British merchant an advantage over all others.

1st. Their extensive credit, which, I confess, I wish to see abolished.

2d. Their having in one place magazines containing all kinds of articles, that can be required.

3d. Their knowledge of the precise kinds of merchandise and fabrics which are wanted.

For my own part I could wish to see the time when no credit should be given. Attention and experience in the American trade would enable the French merchants, I apprehend, to accommodate our markets in

other respects. Between this country and England many causes of irritation exist, and it is not impossible but that the ill policy of the British court may accelerate the removal of our trade into other channels. I am, &c.

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 30 March, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favor of the 10th came duly to hand, and by Mr. Madison I had the pleasure to hear that you had recovered from a severe illness. On this event I sincerely congratulate you. The conduct of the State of New Hampshire has baffled all calculation, and has come extremely *malapropos* for a favorable decision on the proposed constitution in this State; for, be the real cause of the late adjournment what it may, the anti-federal party with us do not scruple to pronounce, that it was done to await the issue of this convention before it would decide, and add, that, if this State should reject it, all those who are to follow will do the same, and consequently that it cannot obtain, as there will be only eight States in favor of the measure.[1]

[1] A majority of the New Hampshire convention was, contrary to the expectations of those who had followed her elections, opposed to the constitution. In a short time a small majority was in its favor, but the converts were bound by their instructions, and the Convention adjourned to suffer them to consult their constituents. Bancroft asserts that the argument having the greatest weight was that as a small State, it would be prudent for New Hampshire to wait and see what the other States would do.

"Circumstanced as your convention was, an adjournment was certainly prudent, but it happened very *malapropos* for this State, because the concurrent

Had it not been for this untoward event, the opposition would have proved entirely unavailing in this State, notwithstanding the unfair (I might without much impropriety have made use of a harsher expression) conduct, which has been practised to rouse the fears and to inflame the minds of the people. What will be the result now, is not for me to say, as I have seen but a partial return of the delegates, and have little or no knowledge of the political sentiments of many of them. In the northern part of the State the current of sentiment, (I know,) is generally in favor of the new form. In the southern part, I am told, it is the reverse. Whilst in deciding the question, and here the idea of its becoming an impediment to its separation from this, operates thoroughly, whilst pains have not been wanting to inculcate a belief, that the general government proposed will, without scruple or delay, barter away their rights to navigation of the Mississippi.[1]

information from that quarter would have justified the expectation of a unanimity in the convention; whereas an account so opposite to every former one, having arrived at the very time when the elections were carrying on here, gave an opportunity to the opponents of the proposed constitution to hold up to the people its not having been so generally approved of in other States as they had been taught to believe, and of consequence prepared them to receive other impressions unfriendly to the government and tending to influence their votes in favor of antifederal characters."—*Washington to John Langdon*, 2 April 1788.

[1] "This, however, I may say, that the northern, or upper Counties are generally friendly to the adoption of the government; the lower *are said* to be generally unfriendly, the sentiments of the western parts of the States are not fully known, but no means have been left untried to prejudice them against the system, every art that could inflame the passions or touch the interests of men have been essayed;—the ignorant have been told that should the proposed government obtain, their lands would be taken from them and their property disposed of;—and all ranks are informed that the prohibition of the Navigation of the

The postponement in New Hampshire will give strength and vigor to the opposition in New York, and possibly render Rhode Island more tardy than she would otherwise have been, if all the New England States had adopted the measure. Mrs. Washington joins in every good wish for Mrs Knox, yourself & family, &c. I am, &c.

TO CHARLES LEE.

MOUNT VERNON, 4 April, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

I am very sorry I have not yet been able to discharge my account with the James River Company, for the amount of which you presented me with an order.

The almost total loss of my crop last year by the drought, which has obliged me to purchase upwards of eight hundred barrels of corn, and my other numerous and necessary demands for cash, when I find it impossible to obtain what is due to me by any means, have caused me more perplexity and given me

Mississippi (their favorite object) will be a certain consequence of the adoption of the Constitution. But notwithstanding these unfair and unjust representations, I have the fullest confidence in its being received in this State."—*Washington to Lincoln*, 2 April 1788.

"I have not at any moment, despaired of this State's acceptance of the new Constitution, since the ratification of Maryland by so large and decided a majority. The *fury* of the opposition, I believe, is spent, and the grand push was made at the Elections ; failing of success therein, the hopes of its leaders begin to flag, and many of them, or I am mistaken, wish the business was to commence de novo—in which case a different line of march would be taken up by some of them."—*Washington to Gouverneur Morris*, 2 May, 1788.

more uneasiness than I ever experienced before from the want of money. In addition to the disappointments, which I have met with from those who are indebted to me, I have in my hands a number of indents and other public securities, which I have received from time to time as the interest of some Continental loan-office certificates, which are in my possession. As I am so little conversant in public securities of every kind, as not to know the use or value of them, and hardly the difference of one species from another, I have kept them by me from year to year without having an idea that they would depreciate, as they were drawn for interest, and never doubting but they would be received in payment of taxes at any time, till I have found by the revenue law of the last session, that only a particular description of them will pay the taxes of the year 1787. The others pay all arrearages of taxes, and I am informed are not worth more than two shillings and sixpence in the pound. The injustice of this measure is too obvious and too glaring to pass unobserved. It is taxing the honest man for his punctuality, and rewarding the tardy or dishonest with the sum of seventeen shillings and sixpence in every pound which is due from him for taxes. As you are now in Richmond I take the liberty of enclosing to you (in a letter from Mr. Pendleton) a certificate for a negro executed in the year 1781, amounting to £69, which I will thank you to negotiate for me there upon the best terms you can and pay the proceeds thereof in behalf of what is due from me to the James River Company.—The princi-

pal for the negro, and three years interest thereon (which is all that was allowed) amounted to £133, which was divided into two certificates, one receivable in the taxes now due, which I retain to discharge part of my taxes for the year 1787, and the other you have with this. Upon what principle of justice interest is allowed on the above certificates from the 1st of Jany, 1785 *only* my ideas are not sufficiently comprehensive to understand, and if it should fall in your way to inquire, should be glad to know; as also what will or is likely to be the final result of my holding the certificates, which have been given to me for interest of the money I lent the public in the day of its distress. I am well apprized, that these are negotiable *things* as above, and when a person is obliged to part with them, he must, as with other commodities at market, take what they will fetch; but the object of my inquiry is to know what the final end of them will be if retained in my chest. Strange indeed it seems, that the public officers should take in the original certificates, issued new by a scale of their own, reducing the money, as they say, to specie value, give warrants for interest accordingly, and then, behold! these specie warrants are worth two shillings and sixpence in the pound. To commit them to the flames, or suffer this, is a matter of indifference to me. There can be no justice, where there are such practices. You will pardon me for dwelling so long upon this subject. It is a matter, which does not concern me *alone*, but must affect many others. With great esteem and regard, I am, &c.

TO JAMES WILSON.

MOUNT VERNON, 4 April, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

You will please to accept of my best thanks for the copy of the debates of your late convention,[1] which you have been so polite as to send me. That, together with your favor of the 11th ultimo, was handed to me by Mr. Madison. The violent proceedings of the enemies of the proposed constitution in your State are to be regretted, as disturbing the peace of society; but in any other point of view they are not to be regarded, for their unimportance effectually precludes any fear of their having an extensive or lasting influence, and their activity holds up to view the general cast and character of them, which need only to be seen to be disregarded.

It is impossible to say, with any degree of certainty, what will be the determination of the convention in this State upon the proposed plan of government. I have no opportunity of gaining information respecting the matter, but what comes through the medium of the newspapers, or from those gentlemen who visit me, as I have hardly been ten miles from my farm since my return from Philadelphia. Some judgment may be formed when the members chosen by the several counties to serve in convention are known; as their sentiments will be decided, and their choice determined, by their attachment or opposition to the proposed system. A majority of those names I have

[1] The notable volume on *Pennsylvania and the Federal Constitution* 1787–88, edited by John Bach McMaster and Fred. D. Stone, gives a full and complete picture of this factional contest.

yet seen are said to be friendly to the constitution; but these are from the northern parts of the State, from whence less opposition was to be expected. It is, however, certain, that there will be a greater weight of abilities opposed to it here than in any other State. I am, &c.

TO THOMAS JOHNSON.

MOUNT VERNON, 20 April, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

As well from report, as from the ideas expressed to me in your letter in December last, I am led to conclude, that you are disposed, (circumstanced as our public affairs are at present,) to ratify the constitution, which has been submitted to the people by the federal convention; and, under this impression, I take the liberty of expressing a single sentiment on the occasion. It is, that an adjournment, if attempted, of your convention,[1] to a later period than the decision of the question in this State, will be tantamount to the rejection of the constitution. I have good reasons for this opinion, and am told it is the blow which the leading characters of the opposition in the next State have meditated,[2] if it shall be found that a direct attack is not likely to succeed in yours. If this be true it cannot be too much deprecated and guarded against. The postponement in New Hampshire, (although it made no reference to the convention of this State, but proceeded altogether from the local cir-

[1] The convention in the State of Maryland.

[2] That is, the next in which a convention shall assemble after that of Maryland.

cumstances of its own,) is ascribed by the opposition here to complaisance towards Virginia, and great use is made of it. An event similar to this in Maryland would have the worst tendency imaginable; for indecision there would certainly have considerable influence upon South Carolina, the only other State, which is to precede Virginia, and submits the question almost wholly to the determination of the latter. The pride of the State is already touched upon this string, and will be raised much higher if there is fresh cause.

The sentiments of Kentucky are not yet known here. Independent of these, the parties in this State, from the known or presumed opinions of the members, are pretty equally balanced. The one in favor of the constitution preponderates at present; but a little matter, cast into the opposite scale, may make it heaviest.

If, in suggesting this matter, I have exceeded the proper limit, I shall yet hope to be excused. I have but one public wish remaining. It is, that in peace and retirement I may see this country rescued from the danger which is pending, and rise into respectability, maugre the intrigues of its public and private enemies.

I am, with very great esteem and regard, &c.[1]

[1] "Since then I was informed by the Honorable James Mercer, that his brother, Col. John Mercer, who was at that time (July 10th,) in this town [Fredericksburg], was furnished with documents to prove that Genl. Washington had wrote a letter upon the present Constitution, to Governor Johnson, of Maryland; and that Governor Johnson was so much displeased with the officiousness of Genl. Washington, as to induce him to take an active part in bringing about the amendments proposed by a committee of the Convention of Maryland."—*Dr. Brooks to David Stuart.* The rumor was, of course, false: but Washington sent the extract to Governor Johnson and enquired whether it

TO THE MARQUIS DE CHASTELLUX.

MOUNT VERNON, 25 April, 1788.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

In reading your very friendly and acceptable letter, of 21st Decr., 1787, which came to hand by the last mail, I was, as you may well suppose, not less delighted than surprised to meet the plain American words, "my wife." A wife! Well, my dear Marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find you are caught at last. I saw, by the eulogium you often made on the happiness of domestic life in America, that you had swallowed the bait, and that you would as surely be taken, one day or another, as that you were a philosopher and a soldier. So your day has at length come. I am glad of it, with all my heart and soul. It is quite good enough for you. Now you are well served for coming to fight in favor of the American rebels, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, by catching that terrible contagion—domestic felicity—which time, like the small pox or the plague, a man can have only once in his life: because it commonly lasts him (at least with us in America—I dont know how you manage these matters in France) for his whole life time. And yet after all the maledictions you so richly merit on the subject, the worst wish which I can find in my heart to make against Madame de Chastellux and yourself is, that you may neither of you ever get the better of this same—domestic felicity during the entire course of your mortal existence.

was a true statement, or "the *document* and *interpretation* of this matter by Colo. Mercer is the effect of one of those mistakes, which he is so liable to fall into."—*Washington to Johnson*, 31 August, 1788.

If so wonderful an event should have occasioned me, my dear Marquis, to have written in a strange style—you will understand me as clearly as if I had said (what in plain English, is the simple truth) do me the justice to believe that I take a heartfelt interest in whatever concerns your happiness. And in this view I sincerely congratulate you on your auspicious matrimonial connection. I am happy to find that Madame de Chastellux is so intimately connected with the Dutchess of Orleans, as I have always understood that this noble lady was an illustrious pattern of connubial love, as well as an excellent model of virtue in general.

While you have been making love, under the banner of Hymen, the great Personages in the North have been making war, under the inspiration, or rather under the infatuation of Mars. Now, for my part, I humbly conceive, you have had much the best and wisest of the bargain. For certainly it is more consonant to all the principles of reason and religion (natural and revealed) to replenish the earth with inhabitants, rather than to depopulate it by killing those already in existence, besides it is time for the age of knight-errantry and mad-heroism to be at an end. Your young military men, who want to reap the harvest of laurels, don't care (I suppose) how many seeds of war are sown; but for the sake of humanity it is devoutly to be wished, that the manly employment of agriculture, and the humanizing benefits of commerce, would supersede the waste of war and the rage of conquest; and the swords might be turned

into ploughshares, the spears into pruninghooks, and, as the Scripture expresses it, "the nations learn war no more."

Now I will give you a little news from this side of the water, and then finish. As for us, we are plodding on in the dull road of peace and politics. We, who live in these ends of the earth, only hear of the rumors of war like the roar of distant thunder. It is to be hoped, that our remote local situation will prevent us from being swept into its vortex.

The constitution, which was proposed by the federal convention, has been adopted by the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Georgia. No State has rejected it. The convention of Maryland is now sitting, and will probably adopt it; as that of South Carolina is expected to do in May. The other conventions will assemble early in the summer. Hitherto there has been much greater unanimity in favor of the proposed government, than could have reasonably been expected. Should it be adopted, (and I think it will be,) America will lift up her head again, and in a few years become respectable among the nations. It is a flattering and consolatory reflection, that our rising republics have the good wishes of all the philosophers, patriots, and virtuous men in all nations; and that they look upon them as a kind of asylum for mankind. God grant that we may not disappoint their honest expectations by our folly or perverseness. * * *

With sentiments of the purest attachment and esteem, I have the honor to be, my dear Marquis, &c.

TO JOHN ARMSTRONG.

MOUNT VERNON, 25 April, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

From some cause or other, which I do not know, your favor of the 20th of February did not reach me till very lately. This must apologize for its not being sooner acknowledged. Although Colonel Blaine forgot to call upon me for a letter before he left Philadelphia, yet I wrote a few lines to you previous to my departure from that place; whether they ever got to your hands, you best know.

I well remember the observation you made in your letter to me of last year, "that my domestic retirement must suffer an interruption." This took place, notwithstanding it was utterly repugnant to my feelings, my interests, and my wishes. I sacrificed every private consideration, and personal enjoyment, to the earnest and pressing solicitations of those, who saw and knew the alarming situation of our public concerns, and had no other end in view but to promote the interests of their country; conceiving, that under those circumstances, and at so critical a moment, an absolute refusal to act might on my part be construed as a total disregard of my country, if imputed to no worse motives. Although you say the same motives induce you to think, that another tour of duty of this kind will fall to my lot, I cannot but hope, that you will be disappointed; for I am so wedded to a state of retirement, and find the occupations of a rural life so congenial with my feelings, that to be drawn into public at my ad-

vanced age would be a sacrifice, that would admit of no compensation.[1]

Your remarks on the impressions, which will be made on the manners and sentiments of the people by the example of those, who are first called to act under the proposed government, are very just; and I have no doubt but, if the proposed constitution obtains those persons who are chosen to administer it will have wisdom enough to discern the influence, which their example as rulers and legislators may have on the body of the people, and will have virtue enough to pursue that line of conduct, which will most conduce to the happiness of their country. As the first transactions of a nation, like those of an individual upon his first entrance into life, make the deepest impression, and are to form the leading traits in his character, they will undoubtedly pursue those measures, which will best tend to the restoration of public

[1] "Old as I am, I rejoice at the high probability, and therefore near prospect, of a general adoption of the federal constitution. This hope leads us on to the use of that system, in which the federal voice of Pennsylvania stands ready to announce your Excellency the first president of the Union. In this there needs be little hesitation amongst the citizens, but not so with you. Persuaded as I am it will cost you much anxious thought, nevertheless, if the call of God is manifested to you in a plenary or unanimous call of the people, I hope that will obviate every objection; if not for the whole term of four years, at least for half that time, if health admit; considering, as you will, that we were not made for ourselves therefore must not live to ourselves. My sole reason for these early hints is, that by a divine blessing you may be made instrumental in giving a wise and useful *example to successors*, in more things than what may be merely essential to the office. I had like to be so imprudent as to mention a few, but am checked, not by modesty alone, but by former demonstrations, that you will have in full view all I mean and much more. The more dissipated customs of the age, prompted by elevation of rank, national dignity, and other inflated ideas, will but too probably contrast themselves to national economy, real dignity and private virtue too."—*Armstrong to Washington*, 20 February, 1788.

and private faith, and of consequence promote our national respectability and individual welfare.

That the proposed constitution will admit of amendments is acknowledged by its warmest advocates; but to make such amendments as may be proposed by the several States the condition of its adoption would, in my opinion, amount to a complete rejection of it; for, upon examination of the objections, which are made by the opponents in different States, and the amendments, which have been proposed, it will be found, that what would be a favorite object with one State, is the very thing which is strenuously opposed by another. The truth is, men are too apt to be swayed by local prejudices, and those, who are so fond of amendments, which have the particular interest of their own States in view, cannot extend their ideas to the general welfare of the Union. They do not consider, that, for every sacrifice which they make, they receive an ample compensation by the sacrifices, which are made by other States for their benefit; and that those very things, which they give up, operate to their advantage through the medium of the great interest.

In addition to these considerations it should be remembered, that a constitutional door is opened for such amendments, as shall be thought necessary by nine States. When I reflect upon these circumstances, I am surprised to find, that any person, who is acquainted with the critical state of our public affairs, and knows the variety of views, interests, feelings, and prejudices, which must be consulted in framing a

general government for these States, and how little propositions in themselves so opposite to each other will tend to promote that desirable end, can wish to make amendments the *ultimatum* for adopting the offered system.

I am very glad to find, that the opposition in your State, however formidable it has been represented, is generally speaking composed of such characters, as cannot have an extensive influence. Their strength, as well as that of those in the same class in other States, seems to lie in misrepresentation, and a desire to inflame the passions and to alarm the fears by noisy declamation, rather than to convince the understanding by sound arguments or fair and impartial statements. Baffled in their attacks upon the constitution, they have attempted to vilify and debase the characters, who formed it; but even here I trust they will not succeed. Upon the whole, I doubt whether the opposition to the constitution will not ultimately be productive of more good than evil. It has called forth in its defence abilities which would not perhaps have been otherwise expected that have thrown new light upon the science of government. It has given the rights of man a full and fair discussion, and explained them in so clear and forcible a manner, as cannot fail to make a lasting impression upon those, who read the best publications on the subject, and particularly the pieces under the signature of PUBLIUS. There will be a greater weight of abilities opposed to the system in the convention of this State, than there has been in any other; but, notwithstand-

ing the unwearied pains which have been taken, and the vigorous efforts which will be made in the convention to prevent its adoption, I have not the smallest doubt but it will obtain here.

I am sorry to hear, that the college in your neighborhood[1] is in so declining a state as you represent it, and that it is likely to suffer a further injury by the loss of Dr. Nisbet, whom you are afraid you shall not be able to support in a proper manner, on account of the scarcity of cash, which prevents parents from sending their children thither. This is one of the numerous evils, which arise from the want of a general regulating power; for in a country like this, where equal liberty is enjoyed, where every man may reap his own harvest, which by proper attention will afford him much more than is necessary for his own consumption, and where there is so ample a field for every mercantile and mechanical exertion, if there cannot be money found to answer the common purposes of education, not to mention the necessary commercial circulation, it is evident that there is something amiss in the ruling political power, which requires a steady, regulating, and energetic hand to correct and control it. That money is not to be had, every man's experience tells him, and the great fall in the price of property is an unequivocal and melancholy proof of it; when, if that property were well secured, faith and justice well preserved, a stable government well administered, and confidence restored, the tide of population and wealth would flow to us from every part of the globe, and,

[1] Dickinson College at Carlyle, in Pennsylvania.

with a due sense of the blessings, make us the happiest people upon earth. With sentiments of very great esteem and regard, I am, my dear Sir, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 April, 1788.

* * * * * *

I notice with pleasure the additional immunities and facilities in trade, which France has granted by the late royal *arret* to the United States. I flatter myself it will have the desired effect in some measure of augmenting the commercial intercourse. From the productions and wants of the two countries, their trade with each other is certainly capable of great amelioration to be actuated by a spirit of unwise policy. For so surely as ever we shall have an efficient government established, so surely will that government impose retaliating restrictions, to a certain degree, upon the trade of Britain. At present, or under our existing form of confederation, it would be idle to think of making commercial regulations on our part. One State passes a prohibitory law respecting some article, another State opens wide the avenue for its admission. One Assembly makes a system, another Assembly unmakes it. Virginia, in the very last session of her legislature, was about to have passed some of the most extravagant and preposterous edicts on the subject of trade, that ever stained the leaves of a legislative code. It is in vain to hope for a remedy of these, and innumerable other evils, until a general government shall be adopted.

The conventions of six States only have as yet accepted the new constitution. No one has rejected it. It is believed that the convention of Maryland, which is now in session, and that of South Carolina, which is to assemble on the 12th of May, will certainly adopt it. It is also since the elections of members of the convention have taken place in this State, more generally believed, that it will be adopted here, than it was before those elections were made. There will, however, be powerful and eloquent speeches on both sides of the question in the Virginia convention; but as Pendleton, Wythe, Blair, Madison, Jones,[1] Nicholas, Innes, and many other of our first characters, will be advocates for its adoption, you may suppose the weight of abilities will rest on that side. Henry and Mason are its great adversaries.[2] The governor, if he approves it at all, will do it feebly.

On the general merits of this proposed constitution, I wrote to you some time ago my sentiments pretty freely. That letter had not been received by you, when you addressed to me the last of yours, which has come to my hands. I had never supposed that perfection could be the result of accommodation and mutual concession. The opinion of Mr. Jefferson and yourself is certainly a wise one, that the constitution ought by all means to be accepted by nine States be-

[1] Both Dr. W. Jones and Gabriel Jones were reported to be in favor of the constitution.

[2] "The declaration of Henry mentioned in your letter, is a proof to me that desperate measures will be his game. If report does not more than usually exaggerate, Mason, also, is ripening fast for going every length. His licentiousness of animadversion, it is said, no longer spares even the moderate opponents of the Constitution."—*Madison to Randolph*, 10 April, 1788.

fore any attempt should be made to procure amendments; for, if that acceptance shall not previously take place, men's minds will be so much agitated and soured, that the danger will be greater than ever of our becoming a disunited people. Whereas, on the other hand, with prudence in temper and a spirit of moderation, every essential alteration may in the process of time be expected.

You will doubtless have seen, that it was owing to this conciliatory and patriotic principle, that the convention of Massachusetts adopted the constitution *in toto*, but recommended a number of specific alterations, and quieting explanations as an early, serious, and unremitting subject of attention. Now, although it is not to be expected, that every individual in society will or can be brought to agree upon what is exactly the best form of government, yet there are many things in the constitution, which only need to be explained, in order to prove equally satisfactory to all parties. For example, there was not a member of the convention, I believe, who had the least objection to what is contended for by the advocates for a *Bill of Rights* and *Trial by Jury*. The first, where the people evidently retained every thing, which they did not in the express terms give up, was considered nugatory, as you will find to have been more fully explained by Mr. Wilson and others; and, as to the second, it was only the difficulty of establishing a mode, which should not interfere with the fixed modes of any of the States, that induced the convention to leave it as a matter of future adjustment.

There are other points in which opinions would be more likely to vary. As for instance, on the ineligibility of the same person for president, after he should have served a certain course of years. Guarded so effectually as the proposed constitution is, in respect to the prevention of bribery and undue influence in the choice of president, I confess I differ widely myself from Mr. Jefferson and you, as to the necessity or expediency of rotation in that appointment. The matter was fairly discussed in the convention, and to my full conviction, though I cannot have time or room to sum up the argument in this letter. There cannot in my judgment be the least danger, that the president will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupted morals and political depravity; and even then, there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though, when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves, and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes. Under an extended view of this part of the subject, I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man, who on some great emergency shall be deemed universally most capable of serving the public.[1]

[1] To an early applicant for office Washington wrote, 8 June, 1788:

"Your letter is now before me, and requires that I should say something in reply on a subject, in which I feel myself more embarrassed, and more awkwardly situated, than ever I have been before. It is but justice to my own feelings to observe that I am conscious I have never been indisposed to do whatever might be in my power in favor of those, whose misfortunes had been una-

In answer to the observations you make on the probability of my election to the presidency, knowing me as you do, I need only say, that it has no enticing charms and no fascinating allurements for me. However, it might not be decent for me to say I would refuse to accept, or even to speak much about an appointment, which may never take place; for, in so doing, one might possibly incur the application of the moral resulting from that fable, in which the fox is represented as inveighing against the sourness of the grapes, because he could not reach them. All that it will be necessary to add, my dear Marquis, in order to show my decided predilections is, that, (at my time of life and under my circumstances,) the increasing infirmities of nature and the growing love of retirement do not permit me to entertain a wish beyond that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm.

voidably brought upon them without any fault of their own. In this predicament I was not a little concerned at an application for employment under a government which does not yet exist, and with the administration of which (in case it should be adopted and carried into execution) it is much more than possible I may never be concerned. The chaos of uncertainty in which we are involved, and the impropriety of my anticipating events, or hazarding opinions, would scarcely permit me to touch, however slightly, on these delicate topics.

"These circumstances, I observe, had not entirely escaped your attention; you will not, therefore, think it hard that I should mention the subject as peculiarly distressing and perplexing to me. Delicacy forbids, that I should enlarge as to myself. As to you I will only add, that I know nothing but that your character stands in the fairest light, and consequently cannot be actuated by any prejudice against your pretensions.

"I beg, Sir, that the candor and freedom which I have used on this occasion may not be misinterpreted to give you any unintended and unnecessary anxiety, or to induce you to believe, that I have taken in ill part the application, although I thought it to be altogether untimely and improper. On the contrary you may rely upon my protestation, that I am, in every personal consideration, with real esteem and friendship, &c."

Let those follow the pursuits of ambition and fame, who have a keener relish for them, or who may have more years in store for the enjoyment.

Mrs. Washington, while she requests that her best compliments may be presented to you, joins with me in soliciting that the same friendly and affectionate memorial of our constant remembrance and good wishes may be made acceptable to Madame de Lafayette and the little ones. I am, &c.

P. S. May 1st. Since writing the foregoing letter, I have received authentic accounts that the Convention of Maryland has ratified the new Constitution by a majority of 63 to 11.[1]

TO THE COUNT DE ROCHAMBEAU.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 April, 1788.

MY DEAR COUNT,

I have just received the letter, which you did me the honor to write to me on the 18th of January; and am sorry to learn, that the Count de Grasse, our gallant coadjutor in the capture of Cornwallis, is no more. Yet his death is not, perhaps, so much to be deplored as his latter days were to be pitied. It seemed as if an unfortunate and unrelenting destiny pursued him,

[1] "A thorn, this in the sides of the leaders of opposition in this State.—Should South Carolina give us unequivocal opposition of this system, the opposition will become feeble. Yr. eight affirmations without a negative carries weight of argument, if not of eloquence, along with it which might cause even the unerring sister to hesitate.—Mr. Chase it is said, made a display of all his eloquence—Mr. Mercer discharged his whole Artillery of inflammable matter, and Mr. Martin did something—I know not what—but presume with vehemence—yet no comments were made—no, not one.—So the business after a very short Session, ended, and will if I mistake not render yours less tiresome." —*Washington to Madison*, 2 May, 1788.

to destroy the enjoyment of all earthly comfort. The disastrous battle of the 12th of April, the loss of the favor of his King, and the subsequent connexion in marriage with an unworthy woman, were sufficient to have made him weary of the burden of life. Your goodness in endeavoring to sweeten its passage was truly commendable, however it might have been marred by his own impetuosity. But his frailties should now be buried in the grave with him, while his name will be long deservedly dear to his country, on account of his successful coöperation in the glorious campaign of 1781. The Cincinnati in some of the States have gone into mourning for him.

Although your nation and England have avoided from prudential motives, going into a war, yet I fancy their affections have not been much increased by the affair in Holland. The feeling occasioned to France, by the interference of Prussia and Britain, may not pass away altogether without consequences. I wish indeed the affairs of France to be on a footing, which would enable her to be the arbiter of peace to the neighboring nations. The poor Dutch patriots seem, by some means or other, to have been left sadly in the lurch, and to be reduced to a most humiliating condition. And as if the two powers, who reinstated the Stadtholder, had not done enough to set the middle nations together by the ears, they have embroiled forsooth all the north of Europe by bringing the Turks into hostility with the two imperial courts. Should France join with the latter, or even should she continue neuter, I can scarcely conceive that the Ottoman,

will be permitted to hold any of their possessions in Europe. The torch of hostility being once kindled, commonly spreads apace; but it is beyond my prescience to foretell how far this flame will extend itself, before it shall be entirely extinguished. * * *

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 2 May, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 29th of March, which should have been done at an earlier period, had any thing transpired in these parts that was worth communicating.

I can now with pleasure inform you, that the State of Maryland adopted the proposed constitution last Monday by a very great majority. This you will undoubtedly have announced by the public papers before this letter reaches you; but that State will not receive the sole benefit of its adoption; it will have a very considerable influence upon the decision in Virginia, for it has been strongly insisted upon by the opponents in the lower and back counties in this State, that Maryland would reject it by a large majority. The result being found so directly opposite to this assertion will operate very powerfully upon the sentiments of many, who were before undecided, and will tend to fix them in favor of the constitution. It will, if I am not misinformed, have this effect upon many, who are chosen to the convention, and who have depended in a great measure upon the determination of

Maryland to confirm their opinion. But exclusive of this influence the most accurate returns of the members of the convention, with their sentiments so far as they were known, annexed, gave a decided majority in favor of the constitution, and the prevailing opinion is, that it gains advocates daily. I never have, for my own part, once doubted of its adoption here; and, if I have at any time been wavering in my opinion, the present appearances and concurrent information would have completely fixed it.[1]

I am very sorry to find by your letter, that there is so much of the spirit of insurrection yet remaining in your State, and that it discovered itself so strongly in your Assembly; but I hope the influence of those gentlemen, who are friendly to the proposed constitution, and the conciliatory disposition, which was shown by many of the minority in your convention, will so far pervade the States as to prevent that factious spirit from gaining ground. * * * With sentiments of the highest esteem and regard, I am, &c.

[1] "Since the elections in this State, little doubt is entertained of the adoption of the proposed constitution with us, (if no mistake has been made with respect to the sentiments of the Kentucky members.) The opponents to it, I am informed, are *now* also of this opinion. Their grand manœuvres were exhibited at the elections, and some of them, if reports be true, were not much to their credit. Failing in their attempt to exclude the friends to the new government from the convention, and baffled in their exertions to effect an adjournment in Maryland, they have become more passive of late. Should South Carolina, now in session, decide favorably, and the government thereby (nine States having acceded) get into motion, I can scarcely conceive that any one of the remainder, or all of them together, were they to convene for the purpose of deliberation, separated from each other as then they would be in a geographical point of view, would incline to withdraw from the union of the other nine." — *Washington to Jay*, 15 May, 1788.

TO GEORGE STEPTOE WASHINGTON.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, 5 May, 1788.

DEAR GEORGE,

I yesterday received a letter from Mr. Hanson, informing me that you slept from home three nights successively, and one contrary to his express prohibition. Complaints of this nature are extremely painful to me, as it discovers a degree of impropriety in your conduct, which at your time of life, your good sense and discretion ought to point out to you, and lead you to avoid. Although there is nothing criminal in your having slept with a companion of good manners and reputation, as you say you have, yet your absenting yourself from your own lodgings under that pretence may be productive of irregularities and disagreeable consequences; and I now insist upon it in the most pointed terms, that you do not repeat it without the consent and approbation of Mr. Hanson.

One strong motive for my placing you in your present lodgings was, that you might, in your conduct out of school, be guided by Mr. Hanson's advice and directions, as I confide very much in his discretion, and think that he would require nothing of you but what will conduce to your advantage; and, at the age to which you have now arrived, you must be capable of distinguishing between a proper and improper line of conduct, and be sensible of the advantages or disadvantages which will result to you through life from the one or the other.

[1] A nephew of General Washington, son of Samuel Washington.

Your future character and reputation will depend very much, if not entirely, upon the habits and manners, which you contract in the present period of your life. They will make an impression upon you, which can never be effaced. You should therefore be extremely cautious how you put yourself into the way of imbibing those customs, which may tend to corrupt your manners or vitiate your heart. I do not write to you in this style from knowing or suspecting that you are addicted to any vice, but only to guard you against pursuing a line of conduct, which may imperceptibly lead on to vicious courses. Mr. Hanson has done you and Lawrence justice in saying, that your behavior since you have been last with him has been unexceptionable except in this instance, and one more which he has not mentioned; and I hope this is the last complaint I shall ever hear, while you remain in your present situation at least, as it will prevent me from using means to regulate your behavior, which will be disagreeable to us both. I am your sincere friend and affectionate uncle.[1]

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MY DEAR MARQUIS, MOUNT VERNON, 28 May, 1788.

I have lately had the pleasure to receive the two letters by which you introduced to my acquaintance M. Du Pont and M. Vanderkemp and altho' those

[1] He wrote at the same time to Mr. Hanson as follows. "I am sorry that the conduct of one of my nephews has been such, as to render a complaint to me necessary, but I am extremely obliged to you for the communication. George

gentlemen have not as yet been to visit me, you may be persuaded that whensoever I shall have the satisfaction of receiving them, it will be with all that attention to which their merits and your recommendations entitle them.

Notwithstanding you are acquainted with Mr. Barlow in person, and with his works by reputation, I thought I would just write you a line by him, in order to recommend him the more particularly to your civilities. Mr. Barlow is considered by those who are good Judges to be a genius of the first magnitude; and to be one of those Bards who hold the keys of the gate by which Patriots, Sages and Heroes are admitted to immortality. Such are your Antient Bards who are both the priest and door-keepers to the temple of fame. And these, my dear Marquis, are no vulgar functions. Men of real talents in Arms have commonly approved themselves patrons of the liberal arts and friends to the poets, of their own as well as former times. In some instances by acting reciprocally, heroes have made poets, and poets heroes. Alexander the Great is said to have been enraptured with the Poems of Homer, and to have lamented that he had not a rival muse to celebrate his actions. Julius Cæsar is well known to have been a man of a highly cultivated understanding and taste. Augustus was the professed and magnificent rewarder of

has now advanced to that time of life, when it is absolutely necessary, that his conduct should be regulated by some means or other. Coercion would be extremely painful to me; but, if advice, remonstrance, and gentle methods will not answer the purpose, others must be taken. Enclosed is a letter to him, which I have left open for your perusal."—May 5th.

poetical merit—nor did he lose the return of having his atcheivments immortalized in song. The Augustan Age is proverbial for intellectual refinement and elegance in composition ; in it the harvest of laurels and bays was wonderfully mingled together. The age of your Louis the fourteenth, which produced a multitude of great Poets and great Captains, will never be forgotten ; nor will that of Queen Ann in England, for the same cause, ever cease to reflect a lustre upon the kingdom. Although we are yet in our cradle, as a nation, I think the efforts of the human mind with us are sufficient to refute (by incontestable facts) the doctrines of those who have asserted that every thing degenerates in America. Perhaps we shall be found at this moment, not inferior to the rest of the world in the performances of our poets and painters ; notwithstanding many of the incitements are wanting which operate powerfully among older nations. For it is generally understood, that excellence in those sister Arts has been the result of easy circumstances, public encouragements and an advanced stage of society. I observe that the Critics in England, who speak highly of the American poetical geniuses (and their praises may be the more relied upon as they seem to be reluctantly extorted,) are not pleased with the tribute of applause which is paid to your nation. It is a reason why they should be the more caressed by your nation. I hardly know how it is that I am drawn thus far in observations on a subject so foreign from those in which we are mostly engaged, farming and politics, unless because I had little news to tell you.

Since I had the pleasure of writing to you by the last Packet, the Convention of Maryland has ratified the federal Constitution by a majority of 63 to 11 voices. That makes the seventh State which has adopted it. Next Monday the Convention in Virginia will assemble—we have still good hopes of its adoption here, though by no great plurality of votes. South Carolina has probably decided favorably before this time. The plot thickens fast. A few short weeks will determine the political fate of America for the present generation, and probably produce no small influence on the happiness of society through a long succession of ages to come. Should every thing proceed with harmony and consent according to our actual wishes and expectations, I will confess to you sincerely, my dear Marquis, it will be so much beyond any thing we had a right to imagine or expect eighteen months ago, that it will demonstrate as visibly the finger of Providence, as any possible event in the course of human affairs can ever designate it. It is impracticable for you or any one who has not been on the spot, to realise the change in men's minds and the progress towards rectitude in thinking and acting which will then have been made.

Adieu, my dear Marquis, I hope your affairs in France will subside into a prosperous train without coming to any violent crisis. Continue to cherish your affectionate feelings for this country and the same portion of friendship for me, which you are ever sure of holding in the heart of your most sincere, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON.

MOUNT VERNON, 8 June, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged by the few lines you wrote to me on the 4th; and though it is yet too soon to rejoice, one cannot avoid being pleased at the auspicious opening of the business of your convention.[1] Though an ulterior opinion of the decision of this State on the constitution would, at any time previous to the discussion of it in the convention, have been premature, yet I have never yet despaired of its adoption here. What I have mostly apprehended is, that the insidious arts of its opposers to alarm the fears and inflame the passions of the multitude, may have produced instructions to the delegates, that would shut the door against argument, and be a bar to reason. If this is not the case, I have no doubt but that the good sense of this country will prevail against the local views of designing characters, and the arrogant opinions of chagrined and disappointed men.

The decision of Maryland and South Carolina by so large majorities, and the almost certain adoption of the proposed constitution by New Hampshire, will make *all*, except desperate men, look before they leap

[1] "I found, contrary to my expectation, that not only a very full House had been made on the first day, but that it had proceeded to the appointment of the president and other officers. Mr. Pendleton was put into the chair without opposition. Yesterday little more was done, than settling some forms, and resolving that no question, general or particular, should be propounded, till the whole plan should be considered and debated clause by clause. This was moved by Colonel Mason, and, contrary to his expectations, concurred in by the other side. To-day the discussions commenced in committee of the whole. The governor had declared the day of previous amendments passed, and thrown himself fully into the federal scale. Henry and Mason made a lame figure, and appeared to take different and awkward grounds. The federalists are a good

into the dark consequences of rejection. The ratification by eight States without a negative, by three of them unanimously, by six against one in another, by three to one in another, by two to one in two more, and by *all* the weight of *abilities* and *property* in the other, is enough, one would think, to produce a cessation of opposition. I do not mean, that this alone is sufficient to produce conviction in the mind, but I think it ought to produce some change in the conduct of any man, who distrusted his infallibility.

Although I have little doubt of your having received a copy of the enclosed pamphlet, I send it. It is written with much good sense and moderation. I conjecture, but upon no certain ground, that Mr. Jay is the author of it. He sent it to me some time ago, since which I have received two or three more copies.[1]

With sincere esteem and affectionate regard, I am ever yours.

TO JOHN JAY.

DEAR SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 8 June, 1788.

By the last mail I had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 29th of May, and have now the satisfaction to congratulate you on the adoption of the consti-

deal elated by the existing prospect. I dare not, however, speak with certainty as to the decision. Kentucky had been extremely tainted, is supposed to be generally adverse, and every kind of address is going on privately to work on the local interests and prejudices of that and other quarters."—*Madison to Washington*, 4 June, 1788.

[1] The pamphlet by Jay was "An address to the People of the State of New York, on the subject of the Constitution." On receiving a copy, Washington wrote May 15th: "The good sense forcible observations, temper, and moderation, with which it is written, cannot fail, I should think, of making a serious impression, even upon the antifederal mind, where it is not under the influence of such local views as will yield to no argument no proofs."

tution by the convention of South Carolina. I am sorry to learn, there is a probability that the majority of members in the New York convention will be antifederalists. Still I hope, that some event may turn up before they assemble, which may give a new complexion to the business. If this State should, in the intermediate time, make the ninth that shall have ratified the proposed government, it will, I flatter myself have its due weight. To show that this event is now more to be expected than heretofore, I will give you a few particulars, which I have from good authority, and which you might not perhaps immediately obtain through any public channel of conveyance.[1]

On the day appointed for the meeting of the convention, a large proportion of the members assembled, and unanimously placed Mr. Pendleton in the chair. Having on that and the subsequent day chosen the

[1] *From Mr. Jay's Letter.*—"It gives me pleasure to find, that the probability of Virginia's adopting the proposed constitution rather increases. Such an event would undoubtedly disarm the opposition. It appears by recent advices from Charleston, that we count on South Carolina; and the New Hampshire delegates assure me, that their State will come into the measure. There is much reason to believe, that the majority of the convention of this State will be composed of antifederal character; but it is doubtful whether the leaders will be able to govern the party. Many in the opposition are friends to Union, and mean well, but their principal leaders are very far from being solicitous about the fate of the Union. They wish and mean, if possible, to reject the constitution, with as little debate and as much speed as may be. It is not, however, certain, that the greater part of their party will be equally decided, or rather equally desperate. An idea has taken air, that the southern part of the State will at all events adhere to the Union, and, if necessary to that end, seek a separation from the northern. This idea has influence on the fears of the party. I cannot find, that they have as yet so looked forward to contingent events, or even to those the most probable, as to have united in, or formed, any system adapted to them."—New York, May 29th.

rest of their officers, and fixed upon the mode of conducting the business, it was moved by some one of those opposed to the constitution to debate the whole by paragraphs, without taking any question until the investigation should be completed. This was as unexpected as acceptable to the federalists, and their ready acquiescence seems to have somewhat startled the opposite party, for fear they had committed themselves.

Mr. Nicholas opened the business by very ably advocating the system of representation. Mr. Henry in answer went more vaguely into the discussion of the constitution, intimating that the federal convention had exceeded their powers, and that we had been and might be happy under the old confederation, with a few alterations. This called up Governor Randolph, who is reported to have spoken with great pathos in reply, and who declared, that, since so many of the States had adopted the proposed constitution, he considered the sense of America to be already taken, and that he should give his vote in favor of it without insisting previously upon amendments. Mr. Mason rose in opposition, and Mr. Madison reserved himself to obviate the objections of Mr. Henry and Colonel Mason the next day. Thus the matter rested when the last accounts came away.

Upon the whole, the following inferences seem to have been drawn; that Mr. Randolph's declaration will have considerable effect with those, who had hitherto been wavering; that Mr. Henry and Colonel Mason took different and awkward ground, and by no means

equalled the public expectation in their speeches; that the former has probably receded somewhat from his violent measures to coalesce with the latter, and that the leaders of the opposition appear rather chagrined, and hardly to be decided as to their mode of opposition.

The sanguine friends of the constitution counted upon a majority of twenty at their first meeting, which number they imagine will be greatly increased; while those equally strong in their wishes, but more temperate in their habits of thinking, speak less confidently of the greatness of the majority, and express apprehensions of the arts, that may yet be practised to excite alarms with the members from the western district (Kentucky). All, however, agree, that the beginning has been auspicious as could possibly have been expected. A few days will now ascertain us of the result. With sentiments of the highest esteem and regard, I am, &c.

TO WILLIAM SMITH, AND OTHERS, OF BALTIMORE.

GENTLEMEN, MOUNT VERNON, 8 June, 1788.

Captain Barney has just arrived here in the miniature ship called *The Federalist*, and has done me the honor to offer that beautiful curiosity as a present to me on your part. I pray you, Gentlemen, to accept the warmest expressions of my sensibility for this *specimen of American ingenuity*, in which the exactitude of the proportions, the neatness of the workmanship, and the elegance of the decorations, which make your present fit to be preserved in a cabinet of curi-

osities, at the same time that they exhibit the skill and taste of the artists, demonstrate that Americans are not inferior to any people whatever in the use of mechanical instruments, and the art of ship-building.

The unanimity of the agricultural State of Maryland in general, as well as of the commercial town of Baltimore in particular, expressed in their recent decision on the subject of a general government, will not, (I persuade myself,) be without its due efficacy on the minds of their neighbors, who, in many instances, are intimately connected, not only by the nature of their produce, but by the ties of blood and the habits of life. Under these circumstances, I cannot entertain an idea, that the voice of the convention of this State, which is now in session, will be dissonant from that of her nearly allied sister, who is only separated by the Potomac.

You will permit me, Gentlemen, to indulge my feelings in reiterating the heart-felt wish, that the happiness of this country may equal the desires of its sincerest friends, and that the patriotic town, of which you are inhabitants, and in the prosperity of which I have always found myself strongly interested, may not only continue to increase in the same wonderful manner it has formerly done, but that its trade, manufactures, and other resources of wealth, may be placed permanently in a more flourishing situation than they have hitherto been. I am, with respect, &c.[1]

[1] The citizens of Baltimore had recently celebrated the adoption of the constitution in Maryland by various demonstrations of joy. There was a procession, in which the mechanical trades and liberal professions made a brilliant display under their appropriate banners. Commodore Barney performed a

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 17 June, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received your letter of the 25th of May, just when I was on the eve of a departure for Fredericksburg to pay a visit to my mother, from whence I returned only last evening. The information of the accession of South Carolina to the new government since your letter, gives us a new subject of mutual felicitations. It was to be hoped that this auspicious event would have considerable influence upon the proceedings of the convention of Virginia, but I do not find that to have been the case. Affairs in the convention, for some time past, have not worn so good an aspect as we could have wished; and, indeed, the acceptance of the constitution has become more doubtful than it was thought to be at their first meeting.

The purport of the intelligence I received from my private letters by the last night's mail is, that every

conspicuous part on this occasion. "He had a small boat, fifteen feet in length, completely rigged and perfectly equipped *as a ship*, which was called *The Federalist;* which, being mounted on four wheels and drawn by the same number of horses, took its place in the procession. He commanded the ship, and was honored with a crew of captains, who, at his word and the boatswain's pipe, went through all the various manœuvres of making and taking in sail, to the great delight of the crowded windows, doors, and balconies, by which they passed. The ship was immediately followed by all the captains, mates, and seamen at that time in the port of Baltimore. It was paraded through all the principal streets of Fell's Point and other portions of the city, and finally *anchored* on the beautiful and lofty bank of the Basin, which from that occurrence received, and has ever since borne, the name of *Federal Hill.*" After the pageant was over, it was resolved to present the ship to General Washington in the name of the merchants and ship-masters of Baltimore. It was launched, and navigated by Commodore Barney down the Chesapeake Bay to the mouth of the Potomac, and thence up the river to Mount Vernon.—*Life of Joshua Barney*, p. 157.—*Sparks.*

species of address and artifice has been put in practice by the antifederalists to create jealousies and excite alarms. Much appears to depend upon the final part which the Kentucky members will take; into whose minds apprehensions of unreal dangers, respecting the navigation of the Mississippi, and their organization into a separate State, have been industriously infused.[1] Each side seems to think at present, that it has a small majority. However it shall turn, it will be very inconsiderable. Though for my own part, I cannot but imagine, if any decision is had, it will be in favor of the adoption. My apprehension rather is, that a strenuous and successful effort may be made for an adjournment, under an idea of opening a correspondence with those who are opposed to the constitution in other States. Colonel Oswald has been at Richmond, it is said, with letters from the antifederalists in New York and Pennsylvania to their coadjutors in this State.

[1] Chagrined at the chances that had prevented the erection of Kentucky into a separate State, and influenced, perhaps, by the vote of the Kentucky delegates in the Virginia Convention on the new Constitution, Brown was approached by Gardoqui with a hint that the establishment of a separate district, without maritime designs, would give Spain an excuse for "devising some plan for adjusting the markets so much needed in some of our possessions."—*Gardoqui to Florida Blanca*, 25 July, 1788. It is certain that Brown interpreted Gardoqui's offer as a positive promise. "I have been assured by him in the most explicit terms, that if Kentucky will declare her independence, and empower some proper person to negotiate with him, that he has authority and will engage to open the navigation of the Mississippi for the exportation of their produce on terms of mutual advantage; but that this privilege can never be extended to them while part of the United States, by reason of commercial treaties existing between that Court and other powers of Europe."—*Brown to George Muter*, 10 July, 1788. The proposition was submitted only to a few of Brown's correspondents, and does not appear to have been broached in the Kentucky Convention of July, 1788.

The resolution, which came from the antifederalists, much to the astonishment of the other party, that no question should be taken until the whole plan should have been discussed paragraph by paragraph, and the remarkable tardiness in their proceedings (for the convention has been able as yet only to get through the second or third section), are thought by some to have been designed to protract business until the time when the Assembly is to convene, that is the 23d instant, in order to have a more colorable pretext for an adjournment. But, notwithstanding the resolution, there has been much desultory debating, and the opposers of the constitution are reported to have gone generally into the merits of the question. I know not how the matter may be, but a few days will now determine.

I am sorry to find, not only from your intimations, but also from many of the returns in the late papers, that there should be so great a majority against the constitution in the convention of New York; and yet I can hardly conceive, from motives of policy and prudence, they will reject it absolutely, if either this State or New Hampshire should make the ninth in adopting it; as that measure, which gives efficacy to the system, must place any State that shall actually have refused its assent to the new Union in a very awkward and disagreeable predicament.

By a letter I have just received from a young gentleman who lives with me, but who is now at home in New Hampshire,[1] I am advised that there is

[1] Tobias Lear.

every prospect that the constitution will be adopted in that State almost immediately upon the meeting of the convention. I cannot but hope, then, that the States, which may be disposed to make a secession, will think often and seriously on the consequences. Colo. Humphreys who is still here occupied with literary pursuits, desires to be remembered in terms of the sincerest friendship to you and yours.

Mrs. Washington and the family offer with me their best compliments to Mrs. Knox and the little ones. I am, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 June, 1788.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

I like not much the situation of affairs in France. The bold demands of the parliaments, and the decisive tone of the King, show that but little more irritation would be necessary to blow up the spark of discontent into a flame, that might not easily be quenched. If I were to advise, I should say that great moderation should be used on both sides. Let it not, my dear Marquis, be considered as a derogation from the good opinion, that I entertain of your prudence, when I caution you, as an individual desirous of signalizing yourself in the cause of your country and freedom, against running into extremes and prejudicing your cause. The King, though, I think from every thing I have been able to learn, he is really a good-hearted though a warm-spirited man, if thwarted injudiciously in the execution of preroga-

tives that belonged to the crown, and in plans which he conceives calculated to promote the national good, may disclose qualities he has been little thought to possess. On the other hand, such a spirit seems to be awakened in the kingdom, as, if managed with extreme prudence, may produce a gradual and tacit revolution much in favor of the subjects, by abolishing *lettres de cachet*, and defining more accurately the powers of government. It is a wonder to me, there should be found a single monarch, who does not realize that his own glory and felicity must depend on the prosperity and happiness of his people. How easy is it for a sovereign to do that, which shall not only immortalize his name, but attract the blessings of millions.

In a letter I wrote you a few days ago by Mr. Barlow, but which might not possibly have reached New York until after his departure, I mentioned the accession of Maryland to the proposed government, and gave you the state of politics to that period. Since which the convention of South Carolina has ratified the constitution by a great majority. That of this State has been sitting almost three weeks ; and, so nicely does it appear to be balanced, that each side asserts that it has a preponderancy of votes in its favor. It is probable, therefore, the majority will be small, let it fall on whichever part it may. I am inclined to believe it will be in favor of the adoption. The conventions of New York and New Hampshire both assemble this week. A large proportion of members, with the governor at their head, in the former, are said to be opposed to the government in contemplation. New Hampshire, it is thought, will

adopt it without much hesitation or delay. It is a little strange, that the men of large property in the south should be more afraid that the constitution will produce an aristocracy or a monarchy, than the genuine democratical people of the east. Such are our actual prospects. The accession of one State more will complete the number, which, by the constitutional provision, will be sufficient in the first instance to carry the government into effect.

And then, I expect, that many blessings will be attributed to our new government, which are now taking their rise from that industry and frugality, into the practice of which the people have been forced from necessity. I really believe, that there never was so much labor and economy to be found before in the country as at the present moment. If they persist in the habits they are acquiring, the good effects will soon be distinguishable. When the people shall find themselves secure under an energetic government, when foreign nations shall be disposed to give us equal advantages in commerce from dread of retaliation, when the burdens of war shall be in a manner done away by the sale of western lands, when the seeds of happiness which are sown here shall begin to expand themselves, and when every one, (under his own vine and fig-tree,) shall begin to taste the fruits of freedom, then all these blessings (for all these blessings will come) will be referred to the fostering influence of the new government. Whereas many causes will have conspired to produce them. You see I am not less enthusiastic than I ever have been, if a belief that peculiar scenes of felicity are reserved

for this country is to be denominated enthusiasm. Indeed, I do not believe, that Providence has done so much for nothing. It has always been my creed, that we should not be left as an awful monument to prove, "that mankind, under the most favorable circumstances for civil liberty and happiness, are unequal to the task of governing themselves, and therefore made for a master."

We have had a backward spring and summer, with more rain and cloudy weather than almost ever has been known; still the appearance of crops in some parts of the country is favorable, as we may generally expect will be the case, from the difference of soil and variety of climate in so extensive a region; insomuch that I hope, some day or another, we shall become a storehouse and granary for the world. In addition to our former channels of trade, salted provisions, butter, and cheese are exported with profit from the eastern States to the East Indies. In consequence of a contract, large quantities of flour are lately sent from Baltimore for supplying the garrison of Gibraltar. I am, &c.

TO RICHARD HENDERSON.[1]

MOUNT VERNON, 19 June, 1788.

SIR,

Your favor of the 5th instant was lodged at my house while I was absent on a visit to my mother. I am now taking the earliest opportunity of noticing its

[1] A gentleman, who had forwarded certain queries to General Washington, which had been sent to him from Scotland by persons proposing to emigrate to America.

contents, and those of its enclosure. Willing as I am to give satisfaction, so far as I am able, to every reasonable inquiry, (and this is certainly not only so, but may be highly important and interesting,) I must however rather deal in general than particular observations; as I think you will be able, from the length of your residence in the country, and the extensiveness of your acquaintance with its affairs, to make the necessary applications, and add the proper details. Nor would I choose that my interference in the business should be transmitted, lest, in a malicious world, it might be represented that I was officiously using the arts of seduction to depopulate other countries for the sake of peopling our own.

In the first place it is a point conceded, that America, under an efficient government, will be the most favorable country of any in the world for persons of industry and frugality possessed of a moderate capital to inhabit. It is also believed, that it will not be less advantageous to the happiness of the lowest class of people, because of the equal distribution of property, the great plenty of unoccupied lands, and the facility of procuring the means of subsistence. The scheme of purchasing a good tract of freehold estate, and bringing out a number of able-bodied men, indented for a certain time, appears to be indisputably a rational one.

All the interior arrangements of transferring the property and commencing the establishment, you are as well acquainted with as I can possibly be. It might be considered as a point of more difficulty to decide upon the place, which should be most proper

for a settlement. Although I believe that emigrants from other countries to this, who shall be well-disposed, and conduct themselves properly, would be treated with equal friendship and kindness in all parts of it; yet, in the old settled States, land is so much occupied, and the value so much enhanced by the contiguous cultivation, that the price would, in general, be an objection. The land in [the] western country, or that on the Ohio, like all others, has its *advantages and disadvantages*. The neighborhood of the savages, and the difficulty of transportation, were the great objections. The danger of the first will soon cease by the strong establishments now taking place; the inconveniences of the second will be, in a great degree, remedied by opening the internal navigation. No colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices, as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum. Information, property, and strength, will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally, and that there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community.

If I was a young man, just preparing to begin the world, or if advanced in life, and had a family to make a provision for, I know of no country where I should rather fix my habitation than in some part of that region, for which the writer of the queries seems to have a predilection. He might be informed that his namesake and distant relation, General St. Clair, is not only in high repute, but that he is governor of all the territory westward of the Ohio, and that there is a gentleman (to wit, Mr. Joel Barlow) gone from New York

by the last French packet, who will be in London in the course of this year, and who is authorized to dispose of a very large body of land in that country. The author of the queries may then be referred to the "*Information for those who would wish to remove to America*," and published in Europe in the year 1784, by the great philosopher Dr. Franklin. Short as it is, it contains almost every thing, that needs to be known on the subject of migrating to this country. You may find that excellent little treatise in "*Carey's American Museum*," for September, 1787. It is worthy of being republished in Scotland, and every other part of Europe.

As to the European publications respecting the United States, they are commonly very defective. The Abbé Raynal is quite erroneous. Guthrie, though somewhat better informed, is not absolutely correct. There is now an *American Geography* preparing for the press by a Mr. Morse of New Haven in Connecticut, which, from the pains the author has taken in travelling through the States, and acquiring information from the principal characters in each, will probably be much more exact and useful. Of books at present existing, Mr. Jefferson's "*Notes on Virginia*" will give the best idea of this part of the continent to a foreigner; and the "*American Farmer's Letters*," written by Mr. Crevecœur (commonly called Mr. St. John), the French consul in New York, who actually resided twenty years as a farmer in that State, will afford a great deal of profitable and amusive information, respecting the private life of the Americans, as well as the progress of agriculture, manu-

factures, and arts, in their country. Perhaps the picture he gives, though founded on fact, is in some instances embellished with rather too flattering circumstances. I am, &c.

TO CHARLES CARTER.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 June, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

When Mrs. Washington was at the Church in Fredericksburg she perceived the Tomb of her Father, the late John Dandridge, Esqr., to be much out of Sorts and being desirous to have it done up again, will you permit me to request the favor of you to engage a workman to do this, the cost of which I will remit as soon as you shall signify to me that the work is accomplished, and inform me of its amount. I would thank you, my dear Sir, for the ascertainment of this before hand. I have (not inclining to dispute Accounts) felt, in too many instances, the expansion of Tradesmen's consciences when no previous agreement has been made, ever to put it in their power to charge what they please in future. My best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, are tendered to Mrs. Carter. With much truth.

TO CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 June, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure to receive, a day or two ago, your obliging letter of the 24th of last month, in which you advise me of the ratification of the federal

constitution by South Carolina. By a more rapid water conveyance, that good news had some few days before arrived at Baltimore, so as to have been very opportunely communicated to the convention of this State in session at Richmond. It is with great satisfaction I have it now in my power to inform you, that, on the 25th instant, the delegates of Virginia adopted the constitution *in toto*, by a division of eighty-nine in favor of it, to seventy-nine against it; and that, notwithstanding the majority is so small, yet, in consequence of some conciliatory conduct and recommendatory amendments, a happy acquiescence, it is said, is likely to terminate the business here in as favorable a manner as could possibly have been expected.

No sooner had the citizens of Alexandria, (who are federal to a man,) received the intelligence by the mail last night, than they determined to devote this day to festivity. But their exhilaration was greatly increased, and a much keener zest given to their enjoyment, by the arrival of an express, two hours before day, with the news that the convention of New Hampshire had, on the 21st instant, acceded to the new confederacy by a majority of eleven voices, that is to say, fifty-seven to forty-six.

Thus the citizens of Alexandria, when convened, constituted the first public company in America, which had the pleasure of pouring [a] libation to the prosperity of the ten States, that had actually adopted the general government. The day itself is memorable for more reasons than one. It was recollected,

that this day is the anniversary of the battles of Sullivan's Island and Monmouth. I have just returned from assisting at the entertainment, and mention these details, unimportant as they are in themselves, the rather because I think we may rationally indulge the pleasing hope, that the Union will now be established upon a durable basis, and that Providence seems still disposed to favor the members of it with unequalled opportunities for political happiness.

From the local situation, as well as the other circumstances of North Carolina, I should be truly astonished if that State should withdraw itself from the Union. On the contrary, I flatter myself with a confident expectation, that more salutary counsels will certainly prevail. At present there is more doubt how the question will be immediately disposed of in New York; for it seems to be understood, that there is a majority in the convention opposed to the adoption of the new federal system. Yet it is hardly to be supposed, (or rather in my judgment it is irrational to suppose,) they will reject a government, which, from an unorganized embryo ready to be stifled with a breath, has now in the maturity of its birth assumed a confirmed bodily existence. Or, to drop the metaphor, the point in debate has at least shifted its ground from policy to expediency. The decision of ten States cannot be without its operation. Perhaps the wisest way in this crisis will be not to attempt to accept or reject, but to adjourn until the people in some parts of the State can consider the magnitude of the question, and of the consequences involved in it, more

coolly and deliberately. After New York shall have acted, then only one little State will remain. Suffice it to say, *it is universally believed, that the scales are ready to drop from the eyes, and the infatuation to be removed from the heart, of Rhode Island.* May this be the case before that inconsiderate people shall have filled up the measure of iniquity, before it shall be too late.

Mrs. Washington and all with us desire their best compliments may be presented to Mrs. Pinckney and yourself. Wishing that mine may also be made acceptable to you both, I am, &c.

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 29 June, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I beg you will accept my thanks for the communications handed to me in your letter of the 3d instant, and my congratulations on the increasing good dispositions of the citizens of your State, of which the late elections are strongly indicative. No one *can* rejoice more than I do at every step the people of this great country take to preserve the Union, to establish good order and government, and to render the nation happy at home and respectable abroad. No country upon earth ever had it more in its power to attain these blessings than United America. Wondrously strange, then, and much to be regretted indeed would it be, were we to neglect the means, and to depart from the road, which Providence has

pointed us to so plainly. I cannot believe it will ever come to pass. The great Governor of the universe has led us too long and too far on the road to happiness and glory, to forsake us in the midst of it. By folly and improper conduct, proceeding from a variety of causes, we may now and then get bewildered; but I hope and trust, that there is good sense and virtue enough left to recover the right path before we shall be entirely lost.

You will, before this letter can have reached you, have heard of the ratification of the new government by this State. The final question without previous amendments was taken the 25th. Ayes, 89. Noes, 79 —but something recommendatory or declaratory of the rights, the ultimate decision. This account and the news of the adoption by New Hampshire arrived in Alexandria nearly about the same time on Friday evening, and as you will suppose was cause for great rejoicing among the inhabitants, who have not I believe an antifederalist among them. Our accounts from Richmond are, that the debates, through all the different stages of the business, though animated, have been conducted with great dignity and temper; that the final decision exhibited an awful and solemn scene; and that there is every reason to expect a perfect acquiescence therein by the minority. Not only the declaration of Mr. Henry, the great leader of it, who has signified, that, though he can never be reconciled to the constitution in its present form, and shall give it every *constitutional* opposition in his power, yet that he will submit to it peaceably, as he thinks

every good citizen ought to do when it is in exercise, and that he will, both by precept and example, inculcate this doctrine to all around him.

There is little doubt entertained here now of the ratification of the proposed constitution by North Carolina; and, however great the opposition to it may be in New York, the leaders thereof will, I should conceive, consider well the consequences before they reject it. With respect to Rhode Island, the power that governs there has so far baffled all calculation on this question, that no man would choose to hazard an opinion, lest he might be suspected of participating in its phrensy.[1] You have every good wish of this family, and the sincere regard of your affectionate, &c.

TO JOHN JAY.

MOUNT VERNON, 18 July, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

A few days ago I had the pleasure to receive your letter from Poughkeepsie; since which I have not obtained any authentic advices of the proceedings of your convention. The clue you gave me to penetrate into the principles and wishes of the four classes of men among you, who are opposed to the constitution, has opened a large field for reflection and con-

[1] "As the infamy of the conduct of Rhode Island outgoes all precedent, so the influence of her counsels can be of no prejudice. There is no other state or description of Men but would blush to be involved in a connection with the paper money junto of that anarchy. God grant that the honest men may acquire an ascendency before irrevocable ruin shall confound the innocent with the guilty."—*Washington to Trumbull*, 20 July, 1788.

jecture. The accession of ten States must operate forcibly with all the opposition, except the class which is comprehended in your last description.[1] Before this time you will probably have come to some decision. While we are waiting the result with the greatest anxiety, our printers are not so fortunate as to obtain any papers from the eastward. Mine, which have generally been more regular, have however frequently been interrupted for some time past.

It is extremely to be lamented, that a new arrangement in the post-office, unfavorable to the circulation of intelligence, should have taken place at the instant when the momentous question of a general government was to come before the people. I have seen no good apology, not even in Mr. Hazard's publication, for deviating from the old custom of permitting printers to exchange their papers by the mail. That practice was a great public convenience and gratification. If the privilege was not from convention an original right, it had from prescription strong pretensions for continuance, especially at so interesting a period. The interruption in that mode of conveyance has not only given great concern to the friends of the constitution, who wished the public to be pos-

[1] "The leaders in opposition seem to have more extensive views than their adherents, and, until the latter perceive that circumstance, they will probably continue combined. The greater number are, I believe, averse to a vote of rejection. Some would be content with recommendatory amendments; others wish for explanatory ones to settle constructions, which they think doubtful; others would not be satisfied with less than absolute and previous amendments; and I am mistaken if there be not a few, who prefer a separation from the Union to any national government whatever."—*Jay to Washington.*

sessed of every thing, that might be printed on both sides of the question, but it has afforded its enemies very plausible pretexts for dealing out their scandals, and exciting jealousies by inducing a belief, that the suppression of intelligence, at that critical juncture, was a wicked trick of policy, contrived by an aristocratic junto. Now, if the postmaster-general, with whose character I am unacquainted, and therefore would not be understood to form an unfavorable opinion of his motives, has any candid advisers, who conceive that he merits the public employment, they ought to counsel him to wipe away the aspersion he has incautiously brought upon a good cause. If he is unworthy of the office he holds, it would be well that the ground of a complaint, apparently so general, should be inquired into, and, if founded, redressed through the medium of a better appointment.

It is a matter in my judgment of primary importance, that the public mind should be relieved from inquietude on this subject. I know it is said, that the irregularity or defect has happened accidentally, in consequence of the contract for transporting the mail on horseback, instead of having it carried in the *stages;* but I must confess I could never account, upon any satisfactory principles, for the inveterate enmity with which the postmaster-general is asserted to be actuated against that valuable institution. It has often been understood by wise politicians and enlightened patriots, that giving a facility to the means of travelling for strangers, and of intercourse for

citizens, was an object of legislative concern, and a circumstance highly beneficial to any country. In England, I am told, they consider the mail-coaches as a great modern improvement in their post-office regulations. I trust we are not too old, or too proud, to profit by the experience of others. In this article the materials are amply within our reach. I am taught to imagine, that the horses, the vehicles, and the accommodations in America, with very little encouragement, might in a short period become as good as the same articles are to be found in any country of Europe. And at the same time I am sorry to learn, that the line of stages is at present interrupted in some parts of New England, and totally discontinued at the southward.

I mention these suggestions only as my particular thoughts on an establishment, which I had conceived to be of great importance. Your proximity to the person in question, and connexion with the characters in power, will enable you to decide better than I can on the validity of the allegations, and in that case to weigh the expediency of dropping such hints as may serve to give satisfaction to the public. With sentiments of the highest consideration and regard, I am, &c.

P. S.—Since writing the foregoing I have been favored with your letter which was begun on the 4th and continued till the 8th and thank you for the information therein contained. Your next will I hope announce the ratification by your State, without previous amendments.

TO NOAH WEBSTER.

MOUNT VERNON, 31 July, 1788.

SIR,

I duly received your letter of the 14th of July, and can only answer you *briefly*, and generally from *memory;* that a combined operation of the land and naval forces of France and America, for the year 1781, was preconcerted the year before: that the point at attack was not absolutely agreed upon, because it would be easy for the Count de Grasse in good time before his departure from the West Indies to give notice by express at what place he could most conveniently first touch to receive advices, because it could not be foreknown where the enemy would be most susceptible of impression, and because we, (having the command of the water, and with sufficient means of conveyance,) could transport ourselves to any spot with the greatest celerity: that it was determined by me, (nearly twelve months beforehand,) at all hazards to give out and cause it to be believed by the highest military as well as civil officers, that New York was the destined place of attack, for the important purpose of inducing the eastern & middle States to make greater exertions in furnishing specific supplies than they otherwise would have done, as well as for the interesting purpose of rendering the enemy less prepared elsewhere: that these means, and these alone, artillery, boats, stores, and provisions were in seasonable preparation to move with the utmost rapidity to any part of the continent; for the difficulty consisted more in providing, than knowing how to apply, the

military apparatus: that before the arrival of the Count de Grasse, it was the fixed determination *to strike the enemy in the most vulnerable quarter* so as to ensure success with moral certainty, as our affairs were then in the most ruinous train imaginable: that New York was thought to be beyond our effort, and consequently the only hesitation that remained was between an attack upon the British army in Virginia or that in Charleston: and, finally, that (by the intervention of several communications,) and some incidents which cannot be detailed in a letter, and which were *altogether unknown* to the late quartermaster-general of the army, who was informed of nothing but what related to the immediate duties of his own department,) the hostile post in Virginia, from being a *provisional and strongly expected*, became the *definitive and certain object* of the campaign. I only add, that it never was in contemplation to attack New York, unless the garrison should first have been so far disgarnished to carry on the southern operations, as to render our success in the siege of that place as infallible as any future military event can ever be made. For, I repeat it, and dwell upon it again and again, some splendid advantage (whether upon a larger or smaller scale was almost immaterial) was so essentially necessary to revive the expiring hopes and languid exertions of the country, at the crisis in question, that I never would have consented to embark in any enterprise, wherein, from the most rational plan and accurate calculations, the favorable issue should not have appeared as clear to my view

as a ray of light. The failure of an attempt against the posts of the enemy could, in no other possible situation during the war, have been so fatal to our cause.

That much trouble was taken and finesse used to misguide and bewilder Sir Henry Clinton in regard to the real object, by fictitious communications as well as by making a deceptive provision of ovens, forage, and boats in his neighborhood, is certain. Nor were less pains taken to deceive our own army; for I had always conceived, when the imposition did not completely take place at home, it could never sufficiently succeed abroad.

Your desire of obtaining truth is very laudable. I wish I had more leisure to gratify it, as I am equally solicitous the undisguised verity should be known. Many circumstances will unavoidably be misconceived and misrepresented. Notwithstanding most of the papers, which may properly be deemed official, are preserved, yet the knowledge of innumerable things of a more delicate and secret nature is confined to the perishable remembrance of some few of the present generation. I am, with sentiments of esteem and regard, Sir, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 3 August, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your favors of the 21st and 27th of last month came duly to hand. The latter contained the pleasing, and I may add (though I could not reconcile it

to any ideas I entertained of common policy) unexpected account of the unconditional ratification of the constitution by the State of New York. That North Carolina will hesitate long in its choice, I can scarcely believe; but what Rhode Island will do is more difficult to say, though not worth a conjecture, as the conduct of the majority there has hitherto baffled all calculation.

The place proper for the new Congress to meet at will unquestionably undergo, if it has not already done it, much investigation; but there are certain things, which are so self-evident in their nature, as to speak for themselves. This possibly may be one. Where the true point lies I will not undertake to decide; but there can be no hesitation, I think, in pronouncing that in all societies, if the band or cement is strong and interesting enough to hold the body together, the several parts should submit to the inconveniences, for the benefits which they derive from the conveniences of the compact.[1]

[1] "Congress have deliberated in part on the arrangements for putting the new machine into operation, but have concluded on nothing but the times for choosing electors, &c. Those, who wish to make New York the place of meeting, studiously promote delay; others, who are not swayed by this consideration, do not urge despatch. They think it would be well to let as many States as possible have an opportunity of deciding on the constitution; and, what is of more consequence, they wish to give opportunities, where they can take place, for as many elections of State legislatures as can precede a reasonable time, for making the appointments and arrangements referred to them. If there be too great an interval between the acts of Congress on this subject, and the next election or next meeting of a State legislature, it may afford a pretext for an intermediate summoning of the existing members, who are everywhere less federal than their successors hereafter to be elected will probably be. This is particularly the case in Maryland, where the antifederal temper of the executive would render an intermediate and extraordinary meeting of the Assembly

We have nothing in these parts worth communicating. Towards New York we look for whatever is interesting till the States begin to act under the new form, which will be an important epoch in the annals of this country. With sentiments of sincere friendship and affection, I am yours, &c.

TO GEORGE STEPTOE WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 6 August, 1788.

DEAR GEORGE,

It was with equal pain and surprise, that I was informed by Colonel Hanson on Monday last of your unjustifiable behavior in rescuing your brother from that chastisement, which was due to his improper conduct; and which you know, because you have been told it in explicit language, he was authorized to administer whensoever he should deserve it. Sūch

of that State the more likely to be called. On my way through Maryland, I found such an event to be much feared by the friends, and wished by the adversaries, of the constitution. We have no late news from Europe, nor any thing from North Carolina."—*Madison to Washington*, 21 July, 1788.

"I am clearly in sentiment with you that the longer the question respecting the permanent Seat of Congress remains unagitated, the greater certainty there will be of its fixture in a central spot.—But not having the same means of information and judging that you have; it would have been a moot point with me, whether a *temporary* residence of that body at New York would not have been a less likely means of keeping it *ultimately* from the center (being further removed from it) than if it was to be at Philadelphia; because, in proportion as you draw it to the center, you lessen the inconveniences and of course the solicitude of the Southern and Western extremities;—and when to these are super-added the acquaintances and connections which will naturally be formed —the expenses which more than probably will be incurred for the accommodation of the public Officers—with a long train of et ceteras, it might be found an arduous task to approach nearer to the Axis thereafter.—These, however, are first thoughts, and may not go to the true principles of policy which governs in this case."—*Washington to Madison*, 18 August, 1788.

refractory behavior on your part I consider as an insult equally offered to myself, after the above communications; and I shall continue to view it in that light, till you have made satisfactory acknowledgments to Colonel Hanson for the offence given him.

It is as much my wish and intention to see justice done to you and your brother, as it is to punish either when it is merited; but there are proper modes by which this is to be obtained, and it is to be sought by a fair and candid representation of facts which can be supported, and not by vague complaints, disobedience, perverseness, or disobliging conduct, which make enemies without producing the smallest good. So often and strenuously have I endeavored to inculcate this advice, and to show you the advantages, which are to be expected from close application to your studies, that it is unnecessary to repeat it. If the admonitions of friendship are lost, other methods must be tried, which cannot be more disagreeable to you, than it would be to one, who wishes to avoid it, who is solicitous to see you and your brother (the only remaining sons of your father) turn out well, and who is very desirous of continuing your affectionate uncle.[1]

[1] "On my return home last night I found my nephew Lawrence here, who said he was afraid to remain at your house, and offered to show me some bruises he had received. Being prepared for it, I was going this morning to correct him; but he begged so earnestly and promised so faithfully, that there should be no cause of complaint against him for the future, that I have suspended the punishment.

"The letter, which I have written to his brother on the subject, is under this cover, and open for your perusal. He is arrived at that *age* and *size* now, as to be a fitter subject to be reasoned with than to receive corporal punishment; and my primary object in placing these boys with you *last* was, that they, at least

TO CHARLES PETTIT.

MOUNT VERNON, 16 August, 1788.

SIR,

I have to acknowledge with much sensibility the receipt of your letter, dated the 5th instant, in which you offer your congratulations on the prospect of an established government, whose principles seem calculated to secure the benefits of society to the citizens of the United States, and in which you also give a more accurate state of federal politics in Pennsylvania than I had before received. It affords me unfeigned satisfaction to find, that the acrimony of parties is much abated.

Doubtless there are defects in the proposed system, which may be remedied in a constitutional mode. I am truly pleased to learn, that those, who have been considered as its most violent opposers, will not only acquiesce peaceably, but coöperate in its organization, and content themselves with asking amendments in the manner prescribed by the constitution. The great danger in my view was, that every thing might be thrown into the last stage of confusion before any government whatsoever could be established, and that

George, should be treated more on the footing of friendship and as companions, than as *mere* schoolboys. This I hoped would draw George's attention to objects and conversations, that would improve and might contribute in a degree to wean him from boyish amusements, the influence of which would extend to Lawrence.

"Necessary and decent clothes they shall have no cause to complain for the want of; and if you, Sir, once a month, or oftener, would be so obliging as to inspect them and let me know what they need, I will take care that they shall be provided. A line from one of them, lodged at the post, signifying their desire of sending things to my tailor to repair, will induce the occasional call of a servant, which may be sent to town on other business."—*Washington to Samuel Hanson*, 6 August, 1788.

we should suffer a political shipwreck without the aid of one friendly star to guide us into port. Every real patriot must have lamented, that private feuds and local politics should have unhappily insinuated themselves into, and in some measure obstructed, the discussion of a great national question. A just opinion, that the people when rightly informed will decide in a proper manner, ought certainly to have prevented all intemperate or precipitate proceedings on a subject of so much magnitude; nor should a regard to common decency have suffered the zealots in the minority to stigmatize the authors of the constitution as conspirators and traitors. However unfavorably individuals, blinded by passion and prejudice, might have thought of the characters who composed the convention, the election of those characters by the legislatures of the several States, and the reference of their proceedings to the free determination of their constituents, did not carry the appearance of a private combination to destroy the liberties of their country. Nor did the outrageous disposition, which some indulged in traducing and vilifying the members, seem much calculated to produce concord or accommodation.

For myself, I expected not to be exempted from obloquy any more than others. It is the lot of humanity. But if the shafts of malice had been aimed at me in ever so pointed a manner on this occasion, shielded as I was by a consciousness of having acted in conformity to what I believed my duty, they would have fallen blunted from their mark. It is known to

some of my countrymen, and can be demonstrated to the conviction of all, that I was in a manner constrained to attend the general convention, in compliance with the earnest and pressing desires of many of the most respectable characters in different parts of the continent.

At my age, and in my circumstances, what sinister object or personal emolument had I to seek after in this life? The growing infirmities of age, and the increasing love of retirement, daily confirm my decided predilection for domestic life; and the great Searcher of human hearts is my witness, that I have no wish, which aspires beyond the humble and happy lot of living and dying a private citizen on my own farm.

Your candor and patriotism in endeavoring to moderate the jealousies and remove the prejudices, which a particular class of citizens had conceived against the new government, are certainly very commendable, and must be viewed as such by all true friends to their country. In this description I shall fondly hope I have a right to comprehend myself; and shall conclude by professing a grateful sense of your favorable opinion for me. I am, &c.

TO JOHN BEALE BORDLEY.

MOUNT VERNON, 17 August, 1788.

* * * * * *

No wheat that has ever yet fallen under my observation exceeds the wheat which some years ago I cultivated extensively but which, from inattention

during my absence of almost nine years from home, has got so mixed or degenerated as scarcely to retain any of its original characteristics properly. But if the march of the Hessian fly, southerly, cannot be arrested, and Colo. Morgan's experiments are corroborated by others of equal skill and attention, it must yield to the palm the yellow bearded wheat, which, alone, it is said, is able to resist the depredations of that destructive insect. This makes your present of it to me more valuable. I shall cultivate it with care.

The Cape wheat I have cultivated three years successively—The frost of the last year almost destroyed it.—In neither, did it produce a full grain, though a large one.—I have just harvested a little of two kinds of wheat sent me by Arthur Young, Esqr., of England, one of which he says is called the Harrison wheat, and is in high estimation in that country; the other is a large white wheat, to which I do not recollect he has given any name.—The seed being injured in its passage, came up badly and with difficulty any of it was preserved from weads, &c.—No conclusive opinion therefore can be formed of either from the trial of this year, but if there is any thing which indicates a superior quality in it next, I will reserve some of the seed for you.

That the system (if it deserves the appelation of one) of corn, wheat, hay, has been injurious, and if continued would prove ruinous, to our Lands, I believe no person who has attended to the ravages which have been produced by it in our fields is at a loss to decide; but with deference let me ask if the substitute

you propose is the best that can be devised? Wheat follows Corn : here are not only two Corn Crops, but those of the most exhausting nature following each other without the intervention of a restorative, when by the approved courses now practiced in England Grain and (what are called) fallow Crops, succeed each other alternately. Though I am not strongly attached to a particular course (being open to conviction) yet that which has obtained most in my mind, and which I have been endeavoring (for it is not easy to go *fully* into any system which produces a material change at once), is the following, which for the more perfect understanding of it shall have dates to their respective growths of the Crops. By the usual mode it is scarcely necessary to observe we have *three* fields—viz—one in Corn, one in wheat, and one in hay.—By my plan, these *three* fields are divided into *Six*.—For instance one of them, say No. 1, is planted with Corn 8 feet by 2—single stalks ; with Irish Potatoes, or Carrots, or partly both, between that Corn planted in this manner, will yield as much to the Acre as in any other; that the quantity of Potatoes is at least quadruple the quantity of Corn, and that Potatoes do not exhaust the Land, are facts well established in my mind.—In April 1789 it is sown with Buck wheat (for manure) which is plowed in before harvest, when the seed begins to ripen, and there is enough to seed the ground a second time. In July it is again plowed in which gives two dressings to the Land at the expence only of a bushel of B. W: and the plowings which would otherwise be *essential* for a summer

fallow.—In August, after the putrefaction and fermentation is over, wheat is sown, and in 1790 harvested. —In 1791—The best—and earliest kind of Indian Pease are sown in broad cast, to be mown when generally Ripe. Since the adoption of this course, and the progress that has been made to carry it into effect, I have had too much cause to be convinced, that, Pease, harvested in this manner is a considerable exhaustion of the soil—I have some thoughts therefore of substituting a medley—of Pease, Buck wheat for seed, Turnips, Pom-kins, &c., in such parts of the field as will be useful on the farm, and all of them preparatives of the ensuing Crop. In 1792 Spring Barley or Oats ; or equal quantities of each will follow with Clover—The latter to be fed with light Stock after harvest.—In 1793 the Field remains in Clover for Hay or grazing according to circumstances. In 1794 it comes again into Corn and goes on as before.

It may be remarked here as an objection to this System—that wheat, in the best farming Counties in England, follows the Clover hay—is sown on a single plowing—and has been found profitable from practice. —My reasons for departing from that mode are—1st our plowing is not equal to theirs, of course the Clover is not so well buried, nor the ensuing (wheat) Crop so free from grass as theirs ; and 2dly, if we sow wheat, at an early and proper period, we loose a valuable part of the clover Crop—whereas the ground for Corn need not be broken till the season for grazing is over and the Stock in the farm yard. By the tillage too, which the Corn Crop *ought* to receive, followed by B.

W. twice plowed in, Weeds and grass must be entirely eradicated.

To contrast the probable yield of this with the old course, of Corn, wheat and hay—suppose a farm of 300 acres of arable Land.

acres.		bush.	Old bush.		
100 of Maiz	@ 12½ is		1250 @ 3/	£187.	10. 0
100 Wheat	@ 6 "		600 5/	150.	0. 0
100 Pasture				337.	10. 0
	diffe.			£116.	5. 0
				453.	15. 0

Acres.	B.	New Bush.		
50 of Maiz at 12½ is		625 @ 3/	£ 93.	15. 0
Potatoes between the Corn rows will quadruple the Corn but allowing for seed, accidence &c. only double		1250 @ 1/	62.	10. 0
50 of wheat @ 9 is		450 @ 5/	112.	10. 0
50 of Barley @ 10 is		500 @ 3/6	87.	10. 0
50 of Clover Hay—25 Tons @ 50/			62.	10. 0
50 of Pease @ 4 Bush.		200 @ 3/6	35.	0. 0
50 of Pasture			£453.	15. 0

In the above statement, as much, I conceive, is allowed to the old, and taken from the new course, as can be done with Justice.—The Pastures of the latter will be fine, and improving; Those of the former are continually declining, and washing into gullies.—The hand-machine spoken of by you for sowing Clover

Seed I have wished to see but have never yet seen one—but I cannot conceive that by this, or any other contrivance a bushel of seed can be made to subserve 20 acres of Land, and without a considerable mixture of other grass seeds, which would in a manner, be washed in so short a lay as is proposed by either of our Systems.

I have been informed that you have in possession one of Winlaw's machines for threshing wheat: Pray how do you approve of it on trial? Many of these newly invented things meet the approbation of the moment but will not stand the test of constant use, or the usage of common laborers—I have requested Mr. Young if this machine has supported its reputation—either in his opinion, or the Judgment of those on whom he can rely, to send me one. I am, &c.

TO THE COUNT DE MOUSTIER.

MOUNT VERNON, 17 August, 1788.

SIR,

In the letter I did myself the honor to address to your Excellency on the 26th of last March, I intimated that as soon as I should have obtained more particular information concerning the commercial intercourse between France and the United States, I would most willingly communicate the result. Ill prepared as I still am to treat of a subject so complicated in its nature, and so extensive in its consequences, I will now hazard a few facts and general observations, without confining myself strictly to your

questions, to which, however, you may find there will be a constant allusion.

Respecting the utility or hurtfulness of the tobacco contract between Mr. Morris and the Farmers-General, I have heard so many specious arguments on one side and the other, that I find myself embarrassed in making a fair judgment. In ordinary cases I know that all exclusive privileges and even partial monopolies are pernicious. How far in this instance the contract has been only a transference of the business from the foreign agents, (English or Scottish,) who used to conduct it, into other hands, and whether the same exportations in quantity would have been made directly to France through more advantageous channels, I cannot pretend to determine. A free competition in the purchase of that article here, as well as in the sale at the place of market, it seems reasonable to conclude, would be mutually beneficial to both nations, however it might be inconvenient to individuals. Though the present contract will soon expire of course, and leave an equal field of speculation on this side of the Atlantic, I have been taught to believe, that the Farmers-General will not so readily give up their share in the monopoly on the other. So the business must in all probability revert to its original channel.

In reply to your second, third, and fourth questions, I would only briefly observe, that we are yet scarcely sufficiently acquainted with the coarse French woollens, and their lowest prices, to determine how far they can come in rivalship with those of Britain. The

prevailing opinion is in[favor of] the latter; but I see no reason why the former, when calculated for the particular purpose, may not be made equally cheap and good. As to other articles of importation directly from France, they might consist in superfine broadcloths, (particularly blue which can be afforded cheaper and better than from England,) glass, gloves, ribbons, silks, cambrics, plain lawns, linens, printed goods, wine, brandy, oil, fruit, and in general every thing necessary for carrying on the Indian trade; from the Islands, sugar and coffee, in addition to the molasses and rum, which alone are permitted to be exported to the United States at present. Our produce in return to Europe might comprehend tobacco (as the staple from this State), and from the States aggregately wheat, rice, other grain, bread, flour, fish, fish oil, potashes, pearlashes, skins, furs, peltry, indigo, madder, different dyeing woods, lumber, naval stores, iron, coals, and ships ready built; to the Islands, lumber, bar iron, coals, live stock, and provisions of all kinds.

It may be mentioned here as a first principle of extending the intercourse, and as a theory which will be found incontestably true in experiment, *that, in proportion as France shall increase the facility of our making remittances, in the same ratio shall we increase the consumption of her produce and manufactures.* Common sense and sound policy speak thus on our part: "We can furnish new materials of great value, and our ability to do it will augment with our population every day; we want no money for them,

and we desire no credit may be given to us; we cannot manufacture fine articles so cheaply as we can import them, and must, while we continue an agricultural people, be supplied from some quarter; we offer you the preference, and will take in different goods to the amount received from us in our staple commodities."

This doctrine has been already verified, so far as an opportunity has been afforded to observe the effect. The use of French brandy in common taverns, as well as private houses, has been substituted for two or three years past very much in the room of Jamaica rum. Probably not less than twenty-four thousand gallons have been imported into this State in one year. The consumption of French wines is also much greater than it has formerly been; and may, by a moderate calculation, amount to between one half and one third of all that is imported. The demand for both these articles might still be extended with the means of making remittances. Not much French salt is made use of for curing provisions in Virginia. The opinion is, that it is not so clean as that imported from other parts of Europe. If it was properly purified, it might and certainly would be brought out as ballast in great quantities, and find a ready market.

About half the exports from Virginia are carried in American bottoms, the remainder principally in British bottoms. There are, however, a number of other foreign vessels employed in the trade.

I know not of any other equivalents, than those to be derived by France from the extension of her com-

merce, which we can give for any new favors in your Islands.[1] Under the present rigorous restrictions, it is thought that trade is unprofitable for us, and will decay or be disused as soon as other avenues for receiving our produce shall be gradually opened. The maritime genius of this country is now steering our vessels in every ocean; to the East Indies, the north-west coasts of America, and the extremities of the globe. I have the best evidence, that the scale of commerce, so long against us, is beginning to turn in our favor, and that, (as a new thing in our new world,) the amount of exports from one State last year exceeded that of the imports more than two hundred and thirty thousand pounds.

What change in systems, and amelioration in the general complexion of our affairs, are likely to be produced in consequence of the national government,

[1] "I believe I told your Excellency before, I was so little conversant in commercial matters, that I desired but small stress might be placed upon my opinions. It may be necessary to repeat this observation as an apology for what I am about to say on the commerce between this country and the West India Islands. I have every reason to wish, that this trade might, if possible, be made reciprocally beneficial. Of that, however, I entertain some doubts; for hitherto I have thought it of much less importance to the United States, than people commonly imagine it to be. My reasons for this opinion were; first, because I could not learn upon inquiry, that it turned out much, if any, to the advantage of those concerned in it; and, secondly, because all or nearly all the produce imported from thence (cotton excepted) might be considered as articles of luxury, the use of which would in a great measure be dispensed with, if they were not so easily to be obtained. But my greatest reason for supposing the trade detrimental to us was, that rum, the principal article received from thence, is in my opinion the bane of morals and the parent of idleness.

"I have been informed, that, before the war, while all the British Islands were wholly open to our vessels and some of those of other nations partly so, the trade, (by enabling the adventurers to make a circuitous remittance to Europe,) was attended with pretty certain, but very small profits; and that,

which is on the eve of being established, I will not undertake to predict. I hope and trust the ties, which connect this nation with France, will be strengthened and made durable by it. In the mean time there are three things, which I flatter myself will counterbalance, on the side of the French commerce, the three advantages, of which I conceive the British merchants to be possessed. The circumstances to which I allude are, 1st, the increasing prejudices of this country against a commercial intercourse with England, occasioned by provocations and augmented by impositions on her part; 2ndly, the facility given in many instances by the French government for our making remittances in the staple commodities of this country; and, 3dly, the change of taste in favor of articles produced or manufactured in France, which may indeed in a great degree be attributed to the affection and

since the war, it has been generally a losing speculation, even in the State where it has been carried on to the greatest extent, and with more economy in the outfits and navigation than elsewhere. But it will be asked, whether the States, which produce horses, &c., for this trade, would not be greatly injured, in case of its annihilation, for want of a market to dispose of that produce. I answer, that in my judgment it would be better to alter the mode of farming, and to raise sheep and black cattle instead of horses. There can be no want of sufficient demands for wool and beef, nor can I conceive that it would be a difficult affair to substitute the growth of these, in the room of less useful articles. Then I could wish to see the direct commerce with France encouraged to the greatest degree; and that almost all the foreign spirits, which we consume, should consist of the wines and brandies made in that country. The use of those liquors would at least be more innocent to the health and morals of the people, than the thousands of hogsheads of poisonous rum, which are annually consumed in the United States; and upon further reflection it seems obvious to me, that there are articles enough in France, which are wanted here, and others in turn produced here, which are wanted in France, to form the basis of a beneficial, extensive, and durable commerce."—*Washington to Moustier*, 15 December, 1788.

gratitude still felt for her generous interposition in our favor.

I should be truly happy to learn, that this country and its inhabitants have become agreeable to your Excellency upon acquaintance. For you may be assured, Sir, no one can be more zealous than myself in promoting a friendly connexion between our nations, or in rendering your situation perfectly satisfactory, while the United States shall enjoy the benefit of your residence in them. With the highest consideration and respect, I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 August, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received with your letter of the 9th instant, one from Mr. Minot, and also his "History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts." The work seems to be executed with ingenuity, as well as to be calculated to place facts in a true point of view, obviate the prejudices of those, who are unacquainted with the circumstances, and answer good purposes in respect to our government in general. I have returned him my thanks for his present by this conveyance.

The public appears to be anxiously waiting for the decision of Congress respecting the place for convening the national assembly under the new government, and the ordinance for its organization. Methinks it is a great misfortune, that local interests should involve themselves with federal concerns at this moment.

[1] The general terms of this letter were dictated by a wish to say nothing that would be likely to embarrass Jefferson's negotiations in France.

So far as I am able to learn, federal principles are gaining ground considerably. The declaration of some of the most respectable characters in this State (I mean of those who were opposed to the government) is now explicit, that they will give the constitution a fair chance by affording it all the support in their power. Even in Pennsylvania, the minority, who were more violent than in any other place, say they will only seek for amendments in the mode pointed out by the constitution itself.

I will, however, just mention by way of *caveat*, there are suggestions, that attempts will be made to procure the election of a number of antifederal characters to the first Congress, in order to embarrass the wheels of government, and produce premature alterations in its constitution. How these hints, which have come through different channels, may be well or ill-founded, I know not; but it will be advisable, I should think, for the federalists to be on their guard, so far as not to suffer any secret machinations to prevail, without taking measures to frustrate them.[1] That many amendments and explanations might and should take place, I have [no] difficulty in conceding; but I will confess my apprehension is, that the New York circular letter is intended to bring on a general con-

[1] In writing of these election cabals to James McHenry, 31 July, 1788, Washington said:

"I think there will be great reason for those who are well affected to the government to use their utmost exertions, that the worthiest citizens may be appointed to the two Houses of the first Congress, and, where State elections take place previous to this choice, that the same principle govern in these also. For much will doubtless depend on their prudence in conducting business at the beginning, and reconciling discordant dispositions to a reasonable acquiescence with candid and honest measures. At the same time it will be a point

vention at too early a period, and, in short, by referring the subject to the legislatures, to set every thing afloat again. I wish I may be mistaken in imagining, that there are persons, who, upon finding they could not carry their point by an open attack against the constitution, have some sinister designs to be silently effected if possible. But I trust in that Providence, which has saved us in six troubles, yea, in seven, to rescue us again from any imminent though unseen dangers. Nothing, however, on our part ought to be left undone. I conceive it to be of unspeakable importance, that whatever there be of wisdom, and prudence, and patriotism on the continent, should be concentred in the public councils at the first outset. Our habits of intimacy will render an apology unnecessary—Heaven is my witnesss that an inextinguishable desire for the felicity of my country may be prompted is my only motive in making these observations. I am, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 28 August, 1788.

DEAR SIR:

I have had the pleasure to receive your letter dated the 13th, accompanied by one addressed to General Morgan. I will forward the letter to General Morgan

of no common delicacy to make provision for effecting such explanations and amendments, as might be really proper and generally satisfactory, without producing, or at least fostering, such a spirit of innovation as will overturn the whole system.

"I earnestly pray, that the Omnipotent Being, who hath not deserted the cause of America in the hour of its extremest hazard, will never yield so fair a heritage of freedom a prey to *anarchy* or *despotism*."

by the first conveyance, and add my particular wishes, that he would comply with the request contained in it. Although I can scarcely imagine how the watch of a British officer, killed within their lines, should have fallen into his hands, who was many miles distant from the scene of action, yet, if it so happened, I flatter myself there will be no reluctance or delay in restoring it to the family.

As the perusal of the political papers under the signature of PUBLIUS has afforded me great satisfaction, I shall certainly consider them as claiming a most distinguished place in my library. I have read every performance, which has been printed on one side and the other of the great question lately agitated (so far as I have been able to obtain them); and, without an unmeaning compliment, I will say, that I have seen no other so well calculated, in my judgment, to produce conviction on an unbiassed mind as the *production* of your *triumvirate*. When the transient circumstances and fugitive performances, which attended this *crisis*, shall have disappeared, that work will merit the notice of posterity, because in it are candidly and ably discussed the principles of freedom and the topics of government, which will be always interesting to mankind, so long as they shall be connected in civil society.

The circular letter from your convention I presume was the equivalent, by which you obtained an acquiescence in the proposed constitution. Notwithstanding I am not very well satisfied with the tendency of it, yet the federal affairs had proceeded, with few

exceptions, in so good a train, that I hope the political machine may be put in motion, without much effort or hazard of miscarrying.[1]

On the delicate subject with which you conclude your letter, I can say nothing, because the event alluded to may never happen, and because, in case it should occur, it would be a point of prudence to defer forming one's ultimate and irrevocable decision, so long as new data might be afforded for one to act with the greater wisdom and propriety. I would not wish to conceal my prevailing sentiment from you; for you know me well enough, my good Sir, to be persuaded, that I am not guilty of affectation when I tell you, that it is my great and sole desire to live and die in peace and retirement on my own farm. Were it even indispensable, a different line of conduct

[1] On this topic Mr. Madison wrote: "You will have seen the circular letter from the convention of this State. It has a pestilent tendency. If an early general convention cannot be parried, it is seriously to be feared, that the system, which has resisted so many direct attacks, may be at last successfully undermined by its enemies. It is now perhaps to be wished, that Rhode Island may not accede, till this new crisis of danger shall be over. Some think it would have been better, if New York had held out till the operation of the government could have dissipated the fears, which artifice had created, and the attempts resulting from those fears and artifices."—New York, August 11th. This circular letter was sent by the convention of New York to the legislatures of the several States, recommending that a new general convention should be called for the purpose of taking into consideration various amendments to the constitution. See the letter in the *American Museum*, vol. iv., p. 158. Although the Virginia convention ratified the constitution by a small majority only, yet it did not follow the example of New York in this particular. The New York letter was intended to exert an influence on the Virginia convention, but through an accident was not laid before that body. The Assembly convened soon afterwards, however, and adopted strong resolutions to the same effect, and sent an application to Congress, and a circular letter to the several States recommending another general convention.—Wirt's *Life of Patrick Henry*, pp. 299–311.

should be adopted, while you and some others who are acquainted with my heart would acquit, the world and posterity might possibly accuse me [of] inconsistency and ambition. Still I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles), the character of *an honest man*, as well as prove, what I desire to be considered in reality, that

I am, with great sincerity and esteem,

Dear Sir, &c.[1]

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MOUNT VERNON, 31 August, 1788.

SIR,

I was very much gratified a little time ago by the receipt of your letter dated the 2d of May. You have my best thanks for the political information contained in it, as well as for the satisfactory account of the canal of Languedoc. It gives me great pleasure to be made acquainted with the particulars of that stupendous work, though I do not expect to derive any but speculative advantages from it.

When America will be able to embark in projects of such pecuniary extent, I know not; probably not for very many years to come; but it will be a good example, and not without its use, if we can carry our

[1] "I take it for granted, Sir, you have concluded to comply with what will, no doubt, be the general call of your country in relation to the new government. You will permit me to say, that it is indispensable you should lend yourself to its first operations. It is to little purpose to have introduced a system, if the weightiest influence is not given to its firm establishment in the outset."—*Hamilton to Washington*, 13 August, 1788.

present undertakings happily into effect. Of this we have now the fairest prospect. Notwithstanding the real scarcity of money, and the difficulty of collecting it, the laborers employed by the Potomac Company have made very great progress in removing the obstructions at the Shenandoah, Seneca, and Great Falls; insomuch that, if this summer had not proved unusually rainy, and if we could have had a favorable autumn, the navigation might have been sufficiently opened (though not completed) for boats to have passed from Fort Cumberland to within nine miles of a shipping port, by the first of January next. There remains now no doubt of the practicability of the plan, or that, upon the ulterior operations being performed, this will become the great avenue into the western country; a country which is now settling in an extraordinarily rapid manner, under uncommonly favorable circumstances, and which promises to afford a capacious asylum for the poor and persecuted of the earth.

I do not pretend to judge how far the flames of war, which are kindled in the north of Europe, may be scattered, or how soon they will be extinguished. The European politics have taken so strange a turn, and the nations formerly allied have become so curiously severed, that there are fewer sure premises for calculation, than are usually afforded even on the precarious and doubtful subject. But it appears probable to me, that peace will either take place this year, or hostility be greatly extended in the course of the next. The want of a hearty coöperation between the

two imperial powers against the Porte, or the failure of success from any other cause, may accelerate the first contingency. The irritable state, into which several of the other potentates seem to have been drawn, may open the way to the second. Hitherto the event of the contest has proved different from the general expectation. If in our speculations we might count upon discipline, system, and resources, and certainly these are the articles which generally give decisive advantages in war, I had thought full surely the Turks must at least have been driven out of Europe.

Is it not unaccountable, that the Russians and Germans combined are not able to effect so much as the former did alone in the late war? But perhaps these things are all for the best, and may afford room for pacification. I am glad our Commodore Paul Jones has got employment, and heartily wish him success. His new situation may possibly render his talents and services more useful to us at some future day. I was unapprized of the circumstances, which you mention, that Congress had once in contemplation to give him promotion. They will doubtless judge now how far it may be expedient.[1]

By what we can learn from the late foreign gazettes, affairs seem to have come nearly to a crisis in France, and I hope they are beginning to meliorate. Should

[1] The Empress of Russia had recently called Paul Jones into her service, to take part in the war against the Turks, and promised him the rank of rear-admiral. Mr. Jefferson said, that Congress had it once in contemplation to confer on him the rank of admiral, which was to date from the time of his taking the *Serapis*, and suggested that such a step might still be an act of policy.

the contest between the King and the parliaments result in a well-constituted national assembly, it must ultimately be a happy event for the kingdom. But I fear that kingdom will not recover its reputation and influence with the Dutch for a long time to come. Combinations appear also to be forming in other quarters. It is reported by the last European accounts, that England has actually entered into a treaty with Russia, and that the French ambassador at the court of London has asked to be informed of its tenor. In whatever manner the nations of Europe shall endeavor to keep up their prowess in war, and their balance of power in peace, it will be obviously our policy to cultivate tranquillity at home and abroad; and to extend our agriculture and commerce as far as possible.

I am much obliged by the information you gave respecting the credit of different nations among the Dutch money-holders, and fully accord with you with regard to the manner in which our own ought to be used. I am strongly impressed with the expediency of establishing our national faith beyond imputation, and of having recourse to loans only on critical occasions. Your proposal for transferring the whole foreign debt to Holland is highly worthy of consideration. I feel mortified, that there should have been any just ground for the clamor of the foreign officers, who served with us; but, after having received a quarter of their whole debt in specie, and their interest in the same for some time, they have infinitely less reason for complaint than our native officers, of

whom the suffering and neglect have been only equalled by their patience and patriotism. A great proportion of the officers and soldiers of the American army have been compelled by indigence to part with their securities for one eighth of the nominal value; yet their conduct is very different from what you represented that of the French officers to have been.

The merits and defects of the proposed constitution have been largely and ably discussed. For myself, I was ready to have embraced any tolerable compromise, that was competent to save us from impending ruin; and I can say there are scarcely any of the amendments, which have been suggested, to which I have much objection, except that which goes to the prevention of direct taxation. And that, I presume, will be more strenuously advocated and insisted upon hereafter, than any other. I had indulged the expectation, that the new government would enable those entrusted with its administration to do justice to the public creditors, and retrieve the national character. But, if no means are to be employed but requisitions, that expectation was vain, and we may as well recur to the old confederation. If the system can be put in operation, without touching much the pockets of the people, perhaps it may be done; but, in my judgment, infinite circumspection and prudence are yet necessary in the experiment. It is nearly impossible for anybody who has not been on the spot, (from any description) to conceive what the delicacy and danger of our situation have been. Though the peril is not

past entirely, thank God the prospect is somewhat brightening.

You will probably have heard, before the receipt of this letter, that the general government has been adopted by eleven States, and that the actual Congress have been prevented from issuing their ordinance for carrying it into execution, in consequence of a dispute about the place at which the future Congress shall meet. It is probable, that Philadelphia or New York will soon be agreed upon.

I will just touch on the bright side of our national state, before I conclude; and we may perhaps rejoice, that the people have been ripened by misfortune for the reception of a good government. They are emerging from the gulf of dissipation and debt, into which they had precipitated themselves at the close of the war. Economy and industry are evidently gaining ground. Not only agriculture, but even manufactures, are much more attended to than formerly. Notwithstanding the shackles under which our trade in general labors, commerce to the East Indies is prosecuted with considerable success. Salted provisions and other produce, (particularly from Massachusetts,) have found an advantageous market there. The voyages are so much shorter, and the vessels are navigated at so much less expense, that we may hope to rival and supply, (at least through the West Indies,) some part of Europe with commodities from thence. This year the exports from Massachusetts have amounted to a great deal more than their imports. I wish this was the case everywhere. * * *

TO HENRY LEE, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 22 September, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 13th instant was of so friendly and confidential a complexion, as to merit my early attention and cordial acknowledgments. I am glad Congress have at last decided upon an ordinance for carrying the new government into execution. In my mind the place for the meeting of the new Congress was not an object of such very important consequence; but I greatly fear, that the question entailed upon that body, respecting their permanent residence, will be pregnant with difficulty and danger. God grant that true patriotism and a spirit of moderation may exclude a narrow locality, and all ideas unfriendly to the Union, from every quarter.

Your observations on the solemnity of the crisis, and its application to myself, bring before me subjects of the most momentous and interesting nature. In our endeavors to establish a new general government, the contest, nationally considered, seems not to have been so much for glory as existence. It was for a long time doubtful whether we were to survive as an independent republic, or decline from our federal dignity into insignificant and wretched fragments of an empire. The adoption of the constitution so extensively, and with so liberal an acquiescence on the part of the minorities in general, promised the former; until lately the circular letter of New York carried, in my apprehension, an unfavorable if not an insidious tendency to a contrary policy. I still hope for the

best; but, before you mentioned it, I could not help fearing it would serve as a standard to which the disaffected might resort. It is now evidently the part of all honest men, who are friends to the new constitution, to endeavor to give it a chance to disclose its merits and defects, by carrying it fairly into effect in the first instance. For it is to be apprehended, that, by an attempt to obtain amendments before the experiment has been candidly made, "more is meant than meets the ear," that an intention is concealed to accomplish slily what could not have been done openly, to undo all that has been done.

If the fact so exists, that a kind of combination is forming to stifle the government in embryo, it is a happy circumstance that the design has become suspected. Preparations should be the sure attendant upon forewarning. Probably prudence, wisdom, and patriotism were never more essentially necessary, than at the present moment; and so far as it can be done in an irreproachably direct manner, no effort ought to be left unessayed to procure the election of the best possible characters to the new Congress. On their harmony, deliberation, and decision every thing will depend. I heartily wish Mr. Madison was in our Assembly, as I think with you it is of unspeakable importance Virginia should set out with her federal measures under right auspices.

The principal topic of your letter is to me a point of great delicacy indeed, insomuch that I can scarcely without some impropriety touch upon it. In the first place, the event to which you allude may never hap-

pen; among other reasons, because, if the partiality of my fellow citizens conceive it to be a means by which the sinews of the new government would be strengthened, it will of consequence be obnoxious to those, who are in opposition to it, many of whom unquestionably will be placed among the electors.

This consideration alone would supersede the expediency of announcing any definite and irrevocable resolution. You are among the small number of those, who know my invincible attachment to domestic life, and that my sincerest wish is to continue in the enjoyment of it solely until my final hour. But the world would be neither so well instructed, nor so candidly disposed, as to believe me uninfluenced by sinister motives, in case any circumstance should render a deviation from the line of conduct I had prescribed to myself indispensable.

Should the contingency you suggest take place, and (for argument's sake alone let me say it) should my unfeigned reluctance to accept the office be overcome by a deference for the reasons and opinions of my friends, might I not, after the declarations I have made (and Heaven knows they were made in the sincerity of my heart), in the judgment of the impartial world and of posterity, be chargeable with levity and inconsistency, if not with rashness and ambition? Nay farther, would there not even be some apparent foundation for the two former charges? Now justice to myself and tranquillity of conscience require, that I should act a part, if not above imputation, at least capable of vindication. Nor will you conceive me to

be too solicitous for reputation. Though I prize as I ought the good opinion of my fellow citizens, yet, if I know myself, I would not seek or retain popularity at the expense of one social duty or moral virtue.

While doing what my conscience informed me was right, as it respected my God, my country, and myself, I could despise all the party clamor and unjust censure, which must be expected from some, whose personal enmity might be occasioned by their hostility to the government. I am conscious, that I fear alone to give any real occasion for obloquy, and that I do not dread to meet with unmerited reproach. And certain I am, whensoever I shall be convinced the good of my country requires my reputation to be put in risk, regard for my own fame will not come in competition with an object of so much magnitude. If I declined the task, it would lie upon quite another principle. Notwithstanding my advanced season of life, my increasing fondness for agricultural amusements, and my growing love of retirement, augment and confirm my decided predilection for the character of a private citizen, yet it would be no one of these motives, nor the hazard to which my former reputation might be exposed, nor the terror of encountering new fatigues and troubles, that would deter me from an acceptance; but a belief, that some other person, who had less pretence and less inclination to be excused, could execute all the duties full as satisfactorily as myself. To say more would be indiscreet; as a disclosure of a refusal beforehand might incur the application of the fable in which the fox is represented

as undervaluing the grapes he could not reach. You will perceive, my dear Sir, by what is here observed, (and which you will be pleased to consider in the light of a confidential communication,) that my inclinations will dispose and decide me to remain as I am, unless a clear and insurmountable conviction should be impressed on my mind, that some very disagreeable consequences must, in all human probability, result from the indulgence of my wishes.

If you return by land, I shall expect without failure the pleasure of your company. I am much indebted to you for your obliging offer of forwarding such articles as I might want from New York, though I shall not have occasion at this moment to avail myself of your goodness. Mrs. Washington offers her best compliments to Mrs. Lee, with ardent wishes for the re-establishment of her health, which, joined with my own, will conclude me. With great regard and esteem, I am, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 23 September, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

* * * Upon mature reflection, I think the reasons you offer in favor of Philadelphia, as the place for the first meeting of Congress, are conclusive; especially when the farther agitation of the question respecting its permanent residence is taken into consideration. But I cannot, however, avoid being satisfied, that the minority should have acquiesced in any plan, rather

than have prevented the system from being carried into effect. The delay had already become the source of clamors, and might have given advantages to the anti-federalists. Their expedient will now probably be an attempt to procure the election of so many of their own junto under the new government. as, by the introduction of local and embarrassing disputes, to impede or frustrate its operations.

In the mean time it behoves all the advocates of the constitution, forgetting partial and smaller considerations, to combine their exertions for collecting the wisdom and virtue of the continent to one centre; in order that the republic may avail itself of the opportunity for escaping from anarchy, division, and the other great national calamities that impended. To be shipwrecked in sight of the port would be the severest of all possible aggravations to our misery, and I assure you I am under painful apprehensions from the single circumstance of Mr. H.[1] having the whole game to play in the assembly of this State; and the effect it may have in others should be counteracted if possible. I am, &c.

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 3 October, 1788.

DEAR SIR,

In acknowledging the receipt of your candid and kind letter by the last post, little more is incumbent upon me than to thank you sincerely for the frankness with which you communicated your sentiments, and

[1] Patrick Henry.

to assure you that the same manly tone of intercourse will always be more than barely welcome; indeed it will be highly acceptable to me. I am particularly glad in the present instance, that you have dealt thus freely and like a friend.[1]

Although I could not help observing, from several publications and letters, that my name had been sometimes spoken of, and that it was possible the *contingency* which is the subject of your letter might happen, yet I thought it best to maintain a guarded silence, and to lack the counsel of my best friends,

[1] In reply to General Washington's remarks in his letter of the 28th of August, respecting the probability of his being elected the first President of the United States, Colonel Hamilton had written as follows:

"I should be deeply pained, my dear Sir, if your scruples in regard to a certain station should be matured into a resolution to decline it; though I am neither surprised at their existence, nor can I but agree in opinion that the caution you observe in deferring the ultimate determination is prudent. I have, however, reflected maturely on the subject, and have come to a conclusion (in which I feel no hesitation), that every public and personal consideration will demand from you an acquiescence in what will *certainly* be the unanimous wish of your country.

"The absolute retreat, which you meditated at the close of the late war, was natural and proper. Had the government produced by the revolution gone on in a *tolerable* train, it would have been most advisable to have persisted in that retreat. But I am clearly of opinion, that the crisis, which brought you again into public view, left you no alternative but to comply; and I am equally clear in the opinion, that you are by that act *pledged* to take a part in the execution of the government. I am not less convinced, that the impression of the necessity of your filling the station in question is so universal, that you run no risk of any uncandid imputation by submitting to it. But, even if this were not the case, a regard to your own reputation, as well as to the public good, calls upon you in the strongest manner to run that risk.

"It cannot be considered as a compliment to say, that on your acceptance of the office of president, the success of the new government in its commencement may materially depend. Your agency and influence will be not less important in preserving it from the future attacks of its enemies, than they have been in recommending it in the first instance to the adoption of the people. Independent of all considerations drawn from this source, the point of light in which

(which I certainly hold in the highest estimation,) rather than to hazard an imputation unfriendly to the delicacy of my feelings. For, situated as I am, I could hardly bring the question into the slightest discussion, or ask an opinion even in the most confidential manner, without betraying, in my judgment, some impropriety of conduct, or without feeling an apprehension, that a premature display of anxiety might be construed into a vainglorious desire of pushing myself into notice as a candidate. Now, if I am not grossly deceived in myself, I should unfeignedly rejoice in

you stand at home and abroad will make an infinite difference in the respectability with which the government will begin its operations, in the alternative of your being or not being at the head of it. I forbear to mention considerations which might have a more personal application. What I have said will suffice for the inferences I mean to draw.

"First; in a matter so essential to the well-being of society as the prosperity of a newly instituted government, a citizen of so much consequence as yourself to its success has no option but to lend his services if called for. Permit me to say, it would be inglorious, in such a situation, not to hazard the glory, however great, which he might have previously acquired.

"Secondly; your signature to the proposed system pledges your judgment for its being such an one as upon the whole was worthy of the public approbation. If it should miscarry, (as men commonly decide from success or the want of it) the blame will in all probability be laid on the system itself. And the framers of it will have to encounter the disrepute of having brought about a revolution in government, without substituting any thing that was worthy of the effort; they pulled down one Utopia, it will be said, to build up another. This view of the subject, if I mistake not, my dear Sir, will suggest to your mind greater hazard to that fame, which must be and ought to be dear to you, in refusing your future aid to the system, than in affording it. I will only add, that in my estimate of the matter, that aid is indispensable.

"I have taken the liberty to express these sentiments, and to lay before you my view of the subject. I doubt not the considerations mentioned have fully occurred to you, and I trust they will finally produce in your mind the same result which exists in mine. I flatter myself the frankness with which I have delivered myself will not be displeasing to you. It has been prompted by motives which you would not disapprove."

case the electors, by giving their votes in favor of some other person, would save me from the dreaded dilemma of being forced to accept or refuse.

If that may not be, I am in the next place earnestly desirous of searching out the truth, and of knowing whether there does not exist a probability that the government would be just as happily and effectually carried into execution without my aid as with it. I am *truly* solicitous to obtain all the previous information, which the circumstances will afford, and to determine (when the determination can with propriety be no longer postponed) according to the principles of right reason, and the dictates of a clear conscience, without too great a reference to the unforeseen consequences, which may affect my person or reputation. Until that period, I may fairly hold myself open to conviction, though I allow your sentiments to have weight in them ; and I shall not pass by your arguments without giving them as dispassionate a consideration as I can possibly bestow upon them.

In taking a survey of the subject, in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I will not suppress the acknowledgment, my dear Sir, that I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind, as often as I have been taught to expect I might, and perhaps must, ere long, be called to make a decision. You will, I am well assured, believe the assertion, (though I have little expectation it would gain credit from those who are less acquainted with me,) that, if I should receive the appointment, and if I should be prevailed upon to accept it, the acceptance would be

attended with more diffidence and reluctance than I ever experienced before in my life. It would be, however, with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the public weal, in hopes that at a convenient and early period my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire, to pass an unclouded evening after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquillity.

But why these anticipations? If the friends to the constitution conceive that my administering the government will be a means of its acceleration and strength, is it not probable that the adversaries of it may entertain the same ideas, and of course make it an object of opposition? That many of this description will become electors, I can have no doubt of, any more than that their opposition will extend to any character, who, (from whatever cause,) would be likely to thwart their measures. It might be impolitic in them to make this declaration *previous* to the election; but I shall be out in my conjectures if they do not act conformably thereto, and from the seeming moderation, by which they appear to be actuated at present is neither more nor less than a finesse to lull and deceive. Their plan of opposition is systematized, and a regular intercourse, I have much reason to believe, between the leaders of it in the several States is formed to render it more effectual. With sentiments of sincere regard and esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

[1] These views produced no change in the sentiments of Colonel Hamilton, in regard to the main topic of discussion. "I feel a conviction," said he in reply, "that you will finally see your acceptance to be indispensable. It is no

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 26 October, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been lately favored with the receipt of your letters of the 24th and 30th of September, with their enclosures, and thank you sincerely for your free and friendly communications. As the period is now rapidly approaching, which must decide the fate of the new constitution, as to the manner of its being carried into execution, and probably as to its usefulness, it is not wonderful that we should all feel an unusual degree of anxiety on the occasion. I must acknowledge my fears have been greatly alarmed, but still I am not without hopes. From the good beginning, that has been made in Pennsylvania, a State from which much was to be feared, I cannot help foreboding well of the others. That is to say, I flatter myself a majority of them will appoint federal members to the several branches of the new government. I

compliment to say, that no other man can sufficiently unite the public opinion, or can give the requisite weight to the office, in the commencement of the government. These considerations appear to me of themselves decisive. I am not sure that your refusal would not throw every thing into confusion. I am sure that it would have the worst effect imaginable. Indeed, as I hinted in a former letter, I think circumstances leave no option."

Many of General Washington's correspondents touched upon the same subject; and he was made to understand from all quarters, that he was designated in the minds of the people as the first chief magistrate under the new constitution. In writing from Connecticut, Colonel Jonathan Trumbull said: "In the choice of president we have, I believe, no discordant voice. All minds are agreed, and every heart exults in the pleasing prospect of having their wishes so nobly gratified in this first great appointment."—October 28th. And Governor Johnson of Maryland wrote: "We cannot, Sir, do without you, and I and thousands more can explain to anybody but yourself why we cannot do without you."—October 10th.—*Sparks.*

hardly should think that Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia would be for attempting premature amendments. Some of the rest may also, in all probability, be apprehensive of throwing our affairs into confusion by such ill-timed expedients.

There will, however, be no room for the advocates of the constitution to relax in their exertions; for, if they should be lulled into security, appointments of antifederal men may probably take place, and the consequences, which you so justly dread, be realized. Our Assembly is now in session. It is represented to be rather antifederal, but we have heard nothing of its doings. Mr. Patrick Henry, Mr. R. H. Lee, and Mr. Madison are talked of for the senate. Perhaps as much opposition, or, in other words, as great an effort for early amendments, is to be apprehended from this State as from any but New York.[1] The constant report is, that North Carolina will soon accede to the new Union. A new Assembly is just

[1] "Our Assembly, (according to different reports,) has proved itself to be, as was apprehended, very much under the influence of Mr. Henry. The choice of delegates for the Senate in Congress has fallen upon two gentlemen, who are considered to be rather opposed to the new constitution, namely, Richard Henry Lee, and Colonel Grayson. But notwithstanding they have been both of them solicitous to obtain previous amendments, Colonel Henry Lee told me lately, that Mr. R. H. Lee had declared to him a few days since, he wished to see the government fairly carried into execution, and that such alterations only should be adopted, as might be found necessary from its errors or defects. If these were not the very words, the observations, I think, were of that import.

"A similar sentiment, I have been credibly informed, has been expressed to more than one person by Colonel Grayson. But the federalists in the Assembly, as I am given to understand, were exceedingly mortified that Mr. Madison should have lost his election by eight or nine votes. It is now much dreaded by the same characters, that the State, which is to be divided into districts for

elected in Maryland, in which it is asserted the number of federalists greatly predominates; and, that being the case, we may look for favorable appointments, in spite of the rancor and activity of a few discontented and, I may say, *apparently* unprincipled men.

I would willingly pass over in silence that part of your letter in which you mention the persons, who are candidates for the first two offices in the executive, if I did not fear the omission might seem to betray a want of confidence. Motives of delicacy have prevented me hitherto from conversing or writing on this subject, whenever I could avoid it with decency. I may, however, with great sincerity, and I believe without offending against modesty or propriety, say to *you*, that I *most* heartily wish the choice to which you allude may not fall upon me; and that, if it should, I must reserve to myself the right of making up my final decision at the last moment, when it can be brought into one view, and when the expedi-

the appointment of representatives to Congress, will be so arranged as to place a large proportion of those, who are called antifederalists, in that station."—*Washington to Lincoln*, 14 November, 1788.

"The accounts from Richmond are indeed, very unpropitious to federal measures. The whole proceedings of the Assembly, *it is said*, may be summed up in one word—to wit: that the edicts of Mr. H[enry] are enregistered with less opposition by the members of that body, than those of the Grand Monarch are in the Parliament of France. He has only to say, let this be Law, and it is Law."—*Washington to Madison*, 17 November, 1788.

On December 2d he wrote to Stuart: "That the Assembly has displayed the most malignant (and if one may be allowed the expression, the most unwarrantable) disposition towards the new government in all its acts respecting it, needs no other evidence than their public records; but upon what ground they have undertaken to assert things which the representatives of the people, chosen for the express purpose in Convention, have not authorized them to do, lays with

ency or inexpediency of a *refusal* can be more judiciously determined than at present. But be assured, my dear Sir, if from any inducement I shall be persuaded ultimately to accept, it will not be (so far as I know my own heart) from any of a private or personal nature. Every personal consideration conspires to rivet me (if I may use the expression) to retirement. At my time of life, and under my circumstances, nothing in this world can ever draw me from it, unless it be a *conviction* that the partiality of my countrymen had made my services absolutely necessary, joined to a *fear* that my refusal might induce a belief that I preferred the conservation of my own reputation and private ease to the good of my country. After all, if I should conceive myself in a manner constrained to accept, I call Heaven to witness, that this very act would be the greatest sacrifice of my personal feelings and wishes, that ever I have been called upon to make. It would be to forego repose and domestic

the wisdom of the majority of that Assembly to explain. Nor will it redound much to their honor I conceive, if in the ultimate appeal to the people there should be (as you have intimated) seven out of the ten representatives on the fœderal side. But excuse me, my dear Sir, when I give it to you as my opinion, that you are reckoning without your host, as the phrase is, not that there may be such a proportion through the State who are friends to the adopted constitution, but they either do not see the necessity, are too indolent, or too much engaged in other matters to come forward, or too much disunited among themselves to act in unison. Whilst those of the other description (or I am much mistaken) will be formed into one solid phalanx. Need I go out of this district for proof?"

And again, to Knox, 1 January, 1789:

"I suppose the two gentlemen appointed by this State are looked upon at the eastward as being included in that class of antifederalists, who wish to cause such great and premature amendments, as will render the government abortive. This idea, I have the best reason to believe, will be found untrue. My belief is founded upon the unequivocal assertions of Colonel Grayson previous

enjoyment, for trouble, perhaps for public obloquy; for I should consider myself as entering upon an unexplored field enveloped on every side with clouds and darkness.

From this embarrassing situation I had naturally supposed that my declarations at the close of the war would have saved me; and that my sincere intentions, then publicly made known, would have effectually precluded me for ever afterwards from being looked upon as a candidate for any office. This hope, as a last anchor of worldly happiness in old age, I had still carefully preserved; until the public papers, and private letters from my correspondents in almost every quarter, taught me to apprehend that I might soon be obliged to answer the question, whether I would go again into public life or not.

You will see, my dear Sir, from this train of reflections, that I have lately had enough of my own perplexities to think of, without adverting much to the affairs of others. So much have I been otherwise occupied, and so little agency did I wish to have in

to his election, and those of Mr. Richard Henry Lee posterior to his election. It is also pretty well ascertained, that, if any considerable proportion of the pains shall be taken by the federalists, which will be by the antifederalists, a majority of the representatives from this State to Congress would undoubtedly be composed of the former description. At present, however, it appears very uncertain whether that will be the case or not; as several federalists, who might in all probability be chosen, have, on account of their private affairs, declined standing as candidates; insomuch, that it is to be feared, in some instances, the votes of the advocates for the constitution will be scattered and lost.

"From different channels of information it seemed probable to me, even before the receipt of your letter, that Mr. John Adams would be chosen vice-president. He will doubtless make a very good one; and let whoever may occupy the first seat, I shall be entirely satisfied with that arrangement for filling the second office."

electioneering, that I have never entered into a single discussion with any person, nor, to the best of my recollection, expressed a single sentiment, orally or in writing, respecting the appointment of a vice-president. From the extent and respectability of Massachusetts, it might reasonably be expected, that he would be chosen from that State. But, having taken it for granted, that the person selected for that important place would be a true federalist, in that case I was altogether disposed to acquiesce in the prevailing sentiments of the electors, without giving any unbecoming preference, or incurring any unnecessary ill will. Since it here seems proper to touch a little more fully upon that point, I will frankly give you my manner of thinking, and what, under certain circumstances, would be my manner of acting.

For this purpose I must speak again hypothetically for argument's sake, and say, supposing I should be appointed to the administration, and supposing I should accept it, I most solemnly declare, that whosoever shall be found to enjoy the confidence of the States, so far as to be elected vice-president, cannot be disagreeable to me in that office. And, even if I had any predilection, I flatter myself I possess patriotism enough to sacrifice it at the shrine of my country; where it will be unavoidably necessary for me to have made infinitely greater sacrifices, before I can find myself in the supposed predicament, that is to say, before I can be connected with others in any possible political relation. In truth I believe, that I have no prejudices on the subject, and that it would

not be in the power of any evil-minded persons, who wished to disturb the harmony of those concerned in the government, to infuse them into my mind. For, to continue the same hypothesis one step farther, supposing myself to be connected in office with any gentleman of character, I would most certainly treat him with perfect sincerity and the greatest candor in every respect. I would give him my full confidence, and use my utmost endeavors to coöperate with him in promoting and rendering permanent the national prosperity. This should be my great, my only aim, under the fixed and irrevocable resolution of leaving to other hands the helm of the State, as soon as my services could possibly with propriety be dispensed with.

I have thus, my dear Sir, insensibly been led into a longer detail than I intended, and have used more egotism than I could have wished, for which I urge no other apology, than but my opinion of your friendship, discretion, and candor. I am, &c.

TO MATHEW CAREY.

MOUNT VERNON, 27 October, 1788.

SIR,

In reply to yours of the 20th of this month, I have to observe, that the fragment of the letter in question, supposed to be written by me, is spurious, and that there was a pamphlet containing a great many letters of the same description published in New York at the same time. It should farther be observed,

that this publication was made soon after several of my letters were really intercepted with the mail, and that the pretended copies of them not only blended many truths with many falsehoods, but were evidently written by some person exceedingly well acquainted with my domestic and general concerns. Advantage was adroitly taken of this knowledge to give the greater appearance of probability to the fiction.

From these circumstances you will perceive, Sir, how prudently you have acted in making an application to me previous to your meditated republication. Otherwise I might have found myself under the necessity of denying that they were genuine, from any apprehension, that being thus preserved in a manner under my eye and with my acquiescence, they must have assumed the seal of veracity in the estimation of posterity. For, whatever credit some of those letters might be thought to have done to my literary or political talents, I certainly cannot choose to avail myself of the imposition.

With due regard, I am, &c.

TO ARTHUR YOUNG.

MOUNT VERNON, 4 December, 1788.

SIR,

I have been favored with the receipt of your letter dated the first day of July; and have to express my thanks for the three additional volumes of the annals, which have also come safely to hand.

The more I am acquainted with agricultural affairs, the better I am pleased with them ; insomuch that I can no where find so great satisfaction as in those innocent and useful pursuits. In indulging these feelings, I am led to reflect how much more delightful to the undebauched mind, is the task of making improvements on the earth, than all the vain glory that can be acquired from ravaging it, by the most uninterrupted career of conquest. The design of this observation is only to shew how much, as a member of human society, I feel myself obliged by your labors to render respectable and advantageous, an employment which is more congenial to the natural dispositions of mankind than any other.

I am also much indebted to you, for the inquiries you were so kind as to make respecting the threshing machines. Notwithstanding I am pretty well convinced from your account, that the new-invented Scotch machine is of superior merit to Winlaw's ; yet I think to wait a little longer before I procure one. In the intermediate time, I am not insensible to your obliging offers of executing this, or any other commission for me ; and shall take the liberty to avail myself of them as occasions may require.

I would willingly have sent you a lock of the wool of my sheep, agreeably to your desire, but it is all wrought into cloth, and I must therefore defer it until after the next shearing. You may expect it by some future conveyance. A manufacturer from Leeds, who was lately here, judges it to be of about the same quality with the English wool in general—though

there is always a great difference in the fineness of different parts of the same fleece. I cannot help thinking that increasing and improving our breed of sheep, would be one of the most profitable speculations we could undertake; especially in this part of the continent, where we have so little winter, that they require either no dry fodder, or next to none; and where we are sufficiently distant from the frontiers, not to be troubled with wolves or other wild vermin, which prevent the inhabitants there from keeping flocks. Though we do not feed our sheep upon leaves, as you mention they do in some parts of France, yet we cannot want for pastures enough suitable for them. I am at a loss, therefore, to account for the disproportion between their value and that of black cattle; as well as for our not augmenting the number. So persuaded am I of the practicability and advantage of it, that I have raised near 200 lambs upon my farm this year. I am glad to find that you are likely to succeed in propagating the Spanish breed of sheep in England, and that the wool does not degenerate; for the multiplication of useful animals is a common blessing to mankind. I have a prospect of introducing into this country a very excellent race of animals also, by means of the liberality of the King of Spain. One of the Jacks which he was pleased to present to me (the other perished at sea) is about 15 hands high, his body and limbs very large in proportion to his height; and the mules which I have had from him, appear to be extremely well formed for service. I have likewise a

jack and two jennets from Malta, of a very good size, which the Marquis de Lafayette sent to me. The Spanish jack seems calculated to breed for heavy slow draught; and the others for the saddle, or lighter carriages. From these, altogether, I hope to secure a race of extraordinary goodness, which will stock the country. Their longevity and cheap keeping will be circumstances much in their favor. I am convinced, from the little experiments I have made with the ordinary mules (which perform as much labor, with vastly less feeding than horses), that those of a superior quality will be the best cattle we can employ for the harness; and indeed in a few years, I intend to drive no other in my carriage, having appropriated for the sole purpose of breeding them, upwards of twenty of my best mares.

Since I wrote to you formerly, respecting the objection made by my laborers to the weight of the ploughs, I have had sufficient experience to overcome the ill-founded prejudice, and find them answer the purpose exceedingly well. I have been laying out my farm into fields of nearly the same dimensions, and assigning crops to each until the year 1795. The building of a brick barn has occupied much of my attention this summer. It is constructed according to the plan you had the goodness to send me; but with some additions. It is now, I believe, the largest and most convenient one in this country. Our seasons in this country (or at least in this part of it) have been so much in the two opposite extremes of dry and wet, for the two summers past,

that many of my experiments have failed to give a satisfactory result, or I would have done myself the pleasure of transmitting it to you. In the first part of last summer, the rains prevailed beyond what has been known in the memory of man ; yet the crops in most parts of the United States are good. They were much injured, however, in those places on my farm where the soil is mixed with clay, and so stiff as to be liable to retain the moisture. I planted a large quantity of potatoes, of which only those that were put in as late as the end of June, have produced tolerably well. I am, notwithstanding, more and more convinced of the prodigious usefulness of this root, and that it is very little, if any thing, of an exhauster. I have a high opinion also of carrots. The same unfavorableness of the season has rendered it unimportant to give a detail of my experiments this year in flax, though I had sowed 25 bushels of the seed. In some spots it has yielded well ; in others very indifferently, much injured by weeds and lodgits.

As to what you suggest at the close of your letter, respecting the publication of extracts from my correspondence in your annals, I hardly know what to say. I certainly highly approve the judicious execution of your well-conceived project of throwing light on a subject, which may be more conducive than almost any other to the happiness of mankind. On the one hand, it seems scarcely generous or proper, that any farmer, who receives benefit from the facts contained in such publications, should withhold his

mite of information from the general stock. On the other hand, I am afraid it might be imputed to me as a piece of ostentation, if my name should appear in the work. And surely it would not be discreet for me to run the hazard of incurring this imputation, unless some good might probably result to society, as some kind of compensation for it. Of this I am not a judge—I can only say for myself, that I have endeavored, in a state of tranquil retirement, to keep myself as much from the eye of the world as I possibly could. I have studiously avoided, as much as was in my power, to give any cause for ill-natured or impertinent comments on my conduct: and I should be very unhappy to have anything done on my behalf (however distant in itself from impropriety), which should give occasion for one officious tongue to use my name with indelicacy. For I wish most devoutly to glide silently and unnoticed through the remainder of life. This is my heart-felt wish; and these are my undisguised feelings. After having submitted them confidentially to you, I have such a reliance upon your prudence, as to leave it with you to do what you think, upon a full consideration of the matter, shall be wisest and best. I am &c.

TO WILLIAM GORDON.

DEAR SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 23 December, 1788.

Your letter dated in London the 24th of September has been duly forwarded to me by your friend Mr. Hazard. As I shall be able to notice the con-

tents but generally and briefly, I request, in the first place, that you will be pleased to accept my best thanks for your good wishes for my happiness here and hereafter. I am pleased to learn, that your *History* is at length completed. I conclude by the spring we may expect to be favored with a sight of it. Your mention of the several objects, you judge of national consequence to the United States, is to be esteemed among the tokens of your kind remembrance of America, and regard to its interests.

How far I may ever be connected with its political affairs is altogether a matter of uncertainty to me. My heartfelt wishes, and, I would fain hope, the circumstances are opposed to it. I flatter myself my countrymen are so fully persuaded of my desire to remain in private life; that I am not without hopes and expectations of being left quietly to enjoy the repose, in which I am at present. Or, in all events, should it be their wish (as you suppose it will be) for me to come again on the stage of public affairs—I certainly will decline it, if the refusal can be made consistently with what I conceive to be the dictates of propriety and duty. For the great Searcher of human hearts knows there is no wish in mine, beyond that of liberty and dying an honest man, on my own farm.

I had quite forgotten the private transaction to which you allude, nor could I recall it to mind without much difficulty. If I now recollect rightly, and I believe I do (though there were several applications made to me), I am conscious of only having done

my duty. As no particular credit is due for that, and as no good but some harm might result from the publication, the letter, in my judgment, had better remain in concealment.[1]

The prospect, that a good general government will in all human probability be soon established in America, affords me more substantial satisfaction than I have ever before derived from any political event; because there is a rational ground for believing, that not only the happiness of my own countrymen, but that of mankind in general, will be promoted by it.

As it is really so long since I have had any occasion to make use of a cipher or key to communicate my sentiments to my correspondents, and as it was so little probable I should ever have any occasion to express them by such modes in future, I have absolutely mislaid or entirely lost yours with others. Besides, I have not a single idea to communicate to any person while in Europe, the knowledge of which

[1] The singular modesty of this paragraph will be fully understood, if the reader will recur to the letter alluded to, dated May 22d, 1782, (Vol. X. p. 21,) in which General Washington replies to a proposition from a high quarter in the army to make him KING. Dr. Gordon had seen that letter when on a visit to Mount Vernon after the war, and in writing the one, to which the above is an answer, he requested permission to publish it, referring at the same time only to its contents, and the circumstances attending it, without mentioning its date. In speaking of the prospect of General Washington's being the first President of the United States, Dr. Gordon said: "The good of the country is a law, that you must submit to, when you are called to possess a power in the most honorable way by all professions and ranks of people, which, to your everlasting honor when known, you honestly declined with the truest patriotism when offered in an irregular manner. This is a secret, which will remain till you are dead, unless I could be certain of not offending through the publication of your letter, with the suppression of the party to whom it was addressed."—London, September 24th.—*Sparks*.

could give any advantage to those, who should be curious enough, or mean enough, to inspect my letters.

Thus much I thought it might be well to say, in apology for my not being able to comply with your request. Indeed, when you consider the domestic walk of life in which I pass my days, the multiplicity of private concerns in which I am involved, the numerous literary applications from different quarters, the round of company I have at my house, and the avocations occasioned by my being at the head of the Company for clearing the Potomac, you will do me the justice to suppose, that I can have few topics or little time for correspondencies of mere friendship, ceremony, or speculation. This I entreat may be accepted as the true reason, why I am not able to write to you very fully, or very regularly. Mrs. Washington joins with me in compliments to Mrs. Gordon. I remain, &c.

TO WILLIAM PIERCE.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 January, 1789.

SIR:

As it would be altogether improper for me to anticipate any thing on the event which you suppose may happen; I only write to let you know that I have duly received your letter of Novr. 1st. I most sincerely and fervently hope it will be found, that I shall not be in a situation to have any agency in the disposal of federal appointments. For you will permit me to say, that the choice is as yet very far from

being certain ; and that should it (contrary to all my wishes) fall upon me, I shall certainly be disposed to decline the acceptance, if it may by any means be done consistently with the dictates of duty.

In this to me unpleasant state of affairs when I cannot but feel myself disagreeably affected by having the subject even obliquely forced upon my mind, —You will be pleased to consider my studied reserve as not in the least intended to militate against your pretensions, and as not having any reference, in the remotest degree, to an office, for which I perceive there will be several competitors.

Although I have thought it would ill become me at present to be more explicit with any person on public matters ; yet in all personal considerations I take a pleasure in subscribing myself with sentiments of great respect and esteem, &c.[1]

[1] "It would take up more time, than I could well spare, to notice the applications which have been made to me in consequence of the new government. In answer to as many as I have been at leisure to acknowledge, I have invariably represented the delicacy of my situation, the impropriety of bringing such things before me, the decided resolution I had formerly made, and the ardent wishes I still entertain of remaining in a private life. You will not then expect, that I should commit myself by saying any thing on a subject, which has never failed to embarrass and distress me beyond measure, whensoever it has been forced upon my consideration."—*Washington to Lutterloh*, 1 January, 1789.

"If it should be my fate to administer the government, I will go into it free from engagements of every kind and nature whatsoever—making, when the pretensions of every candidate are brought to view, as far as my judgment shall direct me, justice and the public good, the sole objects of my pursuits."—*Washington to Benjamin Fishbourn*, 23 December, 1788.

"If I should once more be led into the walks of public life, it is my fixed determination to enter there, not only unfettered by promises, but even unchargeable with creating or feeding the expectation of *any man living* for my assistance to office. And sure I am, a gentleman of your candor and judg-

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

MOUNT VERNON, 29 January, 1789.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

By the last post I was favored with the receipt of your letter dated the 5th of September last. Notwithstanding the distance of its date, it was peculiarly welcome to me; for I had not in the mean time received any satisfactory advices respecting yourself or your country. By that letter my mind was placed much more at its ease, on both those subjects, than it had been for many months.

The last letter, which I had the pleasure of writing to you, was forwarded by Mr. Gouverneur Morris. Since his departure from America, nothing very material has occurred. The minds of men, however, have not been in a stagnant state. But patriotism, instead of faction, has generally agitated them. It is not a matter of wonder, that, in proportion as we approach to the time fixed for the organization and operation of the new government, their anxiety should have been increased, rather than diminished.

ment will approve the resolution; first, because all offices are to be created by law, and consequently are as yet uncertain; 2dly, because the appointment of officers may possibly be left to the heads of departments, or in many instances referred to the executives of the respective States; and, 3dly, because the ear of the nominator ought to be open to the comments on the merits of each candidate, and to be governed primarily by the abilities, which are most peculiarly adapted to the nature and duties of the office which is to be filled. If, unhappily for me, it should be my lot to have any share in the execution of the government, it will be under the influence of these sentiments, and the best knowledge I can obtain of characters, that I shall invariably act with respect to appointments. And with respect to my conduct as a private man, I do verily believe I *never* shall interfere in the appointment to any office whatsoever, beyond a general certificate of facts."—*Washington to Samuel Hanson*, 1 January, 1789.

The choice of senators, representatives, and electors, which (excepting in that of the last description) took place at different times in the different States, has afforded abundant topics for domestic news since the beginning of autumn. I need not enumerate the several particulars, as I imagine you see most of them detailed in the American gazettes. I will content myself with only saying, that the elections have been hitherto vastly more favorable than we could have expected, that federal sentiments seem to be growing with uncommon rapidity, and that this increasing unanimity is not less indicative of the good disposition than the good sense of the Americans. Did it not savor so much of partiality for my countrymen, I might add, that I cannot help flattering myself, that the new Congress, on account of the self-created respectability and various talents of its members, will not be inferior to any Assembly in the world. From these and some other circumstances I really entertain greater hopes, that America will not finally disappoint the expectations of her friends, than I have at almost any former period. Still, however, in such a fickle state of existence I would not be too sanguine in indulging myself with the contemplation of scenes of uninterrupted prosperity, lest some unforeseen mischance or perverseness should occasion the greater mortification, by blasting the enjoyment in the very bud.

I can say little or nothing new, in consequence of the repetition of your opinion, on the expediency there will be for my accepting the office to which

you refer. Your sentiments, indeed, coincide much more nearly with those of my other friends, than with my own feelings. In truth my difficulties increase and magnify as I draw towards the period, when, according to the common belief, it will be necessary for me to give a definitive answer, in one way or another. Should circumstances render it in a manner inevitably necessary to be in the affirmative, be assured, my dear Sir, I shall assume the task with the most unfeigned reluctance, and with a real diffidence, for which I shall probably receive no credit from the world. If I know my own heart, nothing short of a conviction of duty will induce me again to take an active part in public affairs; and, in that case, if I can form a plan for my own conduct, my endeavors shall be unremittingly exerted, (even at the hazard of former fame or present popularity,) to extricate my country from the embarrassments in which it is entangled through want of credit; and to establish a general system of policy, which if pursued will ensure permanent felicity to the commonwealth. I think I see a path as clear and as direct as a ray of light, which leads to the attainment of that object. Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry, and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people. Happily the present posture of affairs, and the prevailing disposition of my countrymen, promise to coöperate in establishing those four great and essential pillars of public felicity.

What has been considered at the moment as a disadvantage, will probably turn out for our good.

While our commerce has been considerably curtailed, for want of that extensive credit formerly given in Europe, and for default of remittance, the useful arts have been almost imperceptibly pushed to a considerable degree of perfection.

Though I would not force the introduction of manufactures, by extravagant encouragements, and to the prejudice of agriculture, yet I conceive much might be done in that way by women, children, and others, without taking one really necessary hand from tilling the earth. Certain it is, great savings are already made in many articles of apparel, furniture, and consumption. Equally certain it is, that no diminution in agriculture has taken place, at the time when greater and more substantial improvements in manufactures were making, than were ever before known in America. In Pennsylvania they have attended particularly to the fabrication of cotton cloths, hats, and all articles in leather. In Massachusetts, they are establishing factories of duck, cordage, glass, and several other extensive and useful branches. The number of shoes made in one town, and nails in another, is incredible. In that State and Connecticut are also factories of superfine and other broadcloths. I have been writing to our friend General Knox this day to procure me homespun broadcloth of the Hartford fabric, to make a suit of clothes for myself. I hope it will not be a great while before it will be unfashionable for a gentleman to appear in any other dress. Indeed, we have already been too long subject to British prejudices. I use no porter or cheese

in my family but such as is made in America. Both those articles may now be purchased of an excellent quality.

While you are quarrelling among yourselves in Europe, while one king is running mad, and others acting as if they were already so, by cutting the throats of the subjects of their neighbors, I think you need not doubt, my dear Marquis, we shall continue in tranquillity here, and that population will be progressive so long as there shall continue to be so many easy means for obtaining a subsistence, and so ample a field for the exertion of talents and industry. All my family join in compliments to Madame de Lafayette and yourself. Adieu.

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

MOUNT VERNON, 31 January, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your two letters of December 20th and January 4th are before me.[1] I am much obliged to you for the intelligence contained in them, because it enabled me to contradict a report in circulation among the antifederalists, that your State had made choice of

[1] "Last Thursday our votes were given in for representatives, and for electors of president and vice-president. Mr. Ames is probably chosen for this district. He was an active member in our convention, and has always distinguished himself as an honest, good man. I can hardly guess who will represent the other districts, except the western one, which I think will be represented by Mr. Sedgwick. The majority, however, I am confident will be good members. There were great exertions made for Mr. Samuel Adams. He would probably have carried the vote, could the people have been persuaded, that he was in heart a federalist. Our senators are federal indeed, Mr. Strong and Mr. Dalton."—*Lincoln to Washington*, 20 December, 1788.

only one representative to Congress, that no more would probably be appointed, and that every thing was in very great confusion. Though facts will ultimately become known, yet much mischief to the federal cause may be done by suffering misrepresentation to pass unnoticed or unrefuted. Last winter the antifederalists in Philadelphia published, "that Connecticut had been surprised into an adoption of the constitution, while a great majority of the freemen were opposed to it." Now it is certain, nothing can fix the stigma of falsehood upon that assertion better than the late respectable appointments in that State. Much the same thing has happened in Maryland. The federal ticket has been carried by a majority of thousands. In the county that bears my name there was not a dissenting vote.

By the best information I can obtain, federal sentiments are spreading perhaps faster than ever in this commonwealth. It is generally supposed that six if not seven of the representatives from it to Congress will be decided friends to the constitution. Monday next will, however, confirm or contradict this opinion, it being the day of election throughout the State. I will only add, that, in Maryland and this State, it is probable Mr. John Adams will have a considerable number of the votes of the electors. Some of those gentlemen will have been advised, that this measure would be entirely agreeable to me, and that I considered it to be the only certain way to prevent the election of an antifederalist. With sentiments of the greatest esteem and regard, I am, &c.

TO SAMUEL POWEL.

MOUNT VERNON, 5 February, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

The letters which you did me the honor of writing to me on the 6th and 26th last month, came duly at hand; and their enclosures were safely delivered to my nephew, Bushrod Washington, who has lately become a resident of Alexandria, where and at the courts in its vicinity he means to establish himself in the practise of the law. No apology, my dear Sir, on this or any other occasion, was or will be necessary for putting any letter you may wish to have safely conveyed to a friend in these parts, under cover to me.

All the political manœuvres which were calculated to impede, if not to prevent the operation of the Government, are now brought to a close until the meeting of the new Congress, and although the issue of *all* the elections is not yet known, they are sufficiently *displayed* to authorize a belief that the opposers of the government have been defeated in almost every instance. Although the elections in this State are over, it will be some time from the extent of it before the representatives to Congress can be finally announced. From *conjecture*, however, it is supposed the majority will be federalists. Some are so sanguine as to believe that seven out of the ten will be so; but this, as I have already said, is altogether conjecture, and vague conjecture; for much pains has been taken, and no art left unessayed, to poison the mind and alarm the fears of the people into opposition.

On the list of the Electors which has been published by the Executive authority of the State, there appear (as far as I am acquainted with the character of the gentlemen) eight decided friends to the new constitution. Be the cause of the British King's insanity what it may, his situation (if alive) merits commiseration. Better perhaps would it have been for *his* nation, though not for *ours* (under present prospects), if this event had happened at the time Dr. Franklin, you say, supposes his Majesty's constitution was first tinged with the malady under which he is now laboring.

Mrs. Washington, the Major and Fanny, and others under this roof, unite in best wishes and affectionate regards for Mrs. Powel.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MOUNT VERNON, 13 February, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

Having found that there is a vessel on the point of sailing from Alexandria for Havre de Grace, I would not forego so good an opportunity of addressing a letter to you, although nothing very material has occurred since the date of my last, which was transmitted by Mr. Gouverneur Morris. As you will doubtless have seen in the gazettes the measures taken by the different States for carrying the new government into execution, I will not therefore enter upon any report of news, or discussion of political topics.

Exclusive of these things, the greatest and most important objects of internal concern, which at present occupy the attention of the public mind, are manufactures and inland navigation. Many successful efforts in fabrics of different kinds are every day made. Those composed of cotton, I think will be of the most immediate and extensive utility. Mr. Milne, an English gentleman, who has been many years introducing those manufactures into France, and whose father is now carrying them on, (under the protection of government,) at the royal château of Muette in Passy, has been at my house this week, and is of opinion that they may be prosecuted in America to greater advantage than in France or England. He has been almost two years in Georgia, stimulating and instructing the planters to the production of cotton. In that State and South Carolina it is said that cotton may be made of a most excellent quality, and in such abundant quantities as to prove a more profitable species of agriculture than any other crop. The increase of that raw material, and the introduction of the late improved machines to abridge labor, must be of almost infinite consequence to the prosperity of United America.

A desire of encouraging whatever is useful and economical seems now generally to prevail. Several capital artists in different branches have lately arrived in this country. A factory of glass is established upon a large scale on Monocacy River near Fredericktown in Maryland. I am informed it will this year produce glass of various kinds nearly to the amount

of ten thousand pounds' value. This factory will be essentially benefited by having the navigation of the Potomac completely opened. But the total benefits of that navigation will not be confined to narrower limits than the extent of the whole western territory of the United States.

You have been made acquainted, my dear Sir, with my ideas of the practicability, importance, and extent of that navigation, as they have been occasionally, though fully expressed, in my several letters to you. * * * Notwithstanding my constant and utmost endeavors to obtain precise information respecting the nearest and best communication between the Ohio and Lake Erie, I am not yet able to add any thing more satisfactory to the observations, which I had the honor to make on that subject in my letter of the 1st of January, 1788; but I have lately received a correct draft, executed principally from actual surveys, of the country between the sources of the Potomac and those navigable waters that fall into the Ohio. Of this I enclose you such a rough sketch as my avocations would permit me to make; my principal object therein being to show, that the distance between the two waters is shorter, and that the means of communication are easier, than I had hitherto represented or imagined. I need not describe what and how extensive the rivers are, which will be thus in a wonderful manner connected, as soon as the Potomac shall be rendered entirely passable. The passage would have been opened from Fort Cumberland to the Great Falls (nine miles from

tide-water) before this time, as I mentioned in my letter of the 31st of August last, had it not been for the unfavorableness of the season. In spite of that untoward circumstance, I have the pleasure to inform you that two or three boats have actually arrived at the last-mentioned place.

I am going on Monday next to visit the works, as far as the Seneca Falls. Could I have delayed writing this letter until my return from thence, and afterwards availed myself of the same conveyance, I might have been more particular in my account of the state of the several works, and especially of the situation of the land adjoining to the Canal at the Great Falls. Whensoever the produce of those parts of the country bordering on the sources of the Potomac, and contiguous to the long rivers (particularly the Shenandoah and South Branch) that run into it, shall be water-borne, down to tide-water for exportation, I conceive this place must become very valuable. From the conveniency of the basin a little above the spot where the locks are to be placed, and from the inducements which will be superadded by several fine mill-seats, I cannot entertain a doubt of the establishment of a town in that place. Indeed mercantile people are desirous that the event should take place as soon as possible. Manufactures of various commodities, and in iron particularly, will doubtless be carried on to advantage there. The mill-seats I well know have long been considered as very valuable ones. How far buildings erected upon them may be exposed to injuries from freshets or the breaking up

of the ice, I am not competent to determine from my own knowledge; but the opinion of persons better acquainted with these matters than I am, is, that they may be rendered secure. On the commodiousness of Alexandria for carrying on the fur trade throughout the whole western country, I treated in a very minute, and I may say almost voluminous manner, in my communication to you on the 30th of May, 1787. Probably Georgetown, and the place which I have just mentioned, will participate largely and happily in the great emoluments to be derived from that and other valuable articles, through the inland navigation of the upper and western country. I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

TO HARRY INNES.

MOUNT VERNON, 2 March, 1789.

SIR,

I have been favored by the receipt of your obliging letter, dated the 18th of December last, just in time to send my acknowledgment by a person who is immediately returning to Kentucky.[1] This circumstance prevents me from expressing so fully as I

[1] "In the latter end of this summer, it was suggested to me, that the British court had emissaries in Kentucky. From the abhorrence and detestation which I have to a British connexion, other than that of friends and allies, I was induced to keep a look-out, and scrutinize the conduct of all strangers. My observations soon convinced me of the truth of the case. Among others, Lieutenant-Colonel Connolly (late of Fort Pitt) from Detroit has visited this district. His conduct has alarmed my fears. He had some confidential conferences with influential characters. He touched the key to fomentations, and offered assistance to enable the inhabitants of the western country to seize on the city of New Orleans, and secure thereby the navigation of the Mississippi. How his machinations are to be counteracted is the great object. I

might otherwise have done, the sense I have of the very patriotic sentiments you entertain respecting the important matter, which is the subject of your letter. As a friend to United America, I embrace with extreme satisfaction the proposals you are pleased to offer of transmitting farther intelligence. For which purpose I will endeavor to arrange and send you a cypher by the earliest safe conveyance. In the mean time, I rely implicitly upon that honor which you have pledged, and those professions which you have made; and sincerely hope, that your activity and discretion will be successful in developing the machinations of all those, who, by sowing the seeds of disaffection, may attempt to separate any portion of the United States from the Union. I will only add, for myself I have little doubt but that

would be more explicit if the conveyance of my letter were more certain. It is entrusted to chance; I must therefore act with caution.

"Relying implicitly on this fact, that whatever tends to disturb the peace of United America would distress and injure your tranquillity and repose, and that your aiding hand would not be withheld when your country's cause required it, I have ventured to solicit your advice and directions on this interesting subject, and would wish to write confidentially to you on this business, if by your answer I should conceive myself justified in the attempt. Should this proposed communication meet your approbation, will it not be advisable to invent a cypher for the preservation of that secrecy, which the magnitude of the subject requires? This being arranged, I pledge my honor to give you from time to time a faithful detail of facts."—*Innes to Washington*, 18 December, 1788.

In October, 1788, John Connolly, who at one time played quite an important part as an agent of Lord Dunmore, a British recruiting agent and a Tory prisoner, came from Detroit to Kentucky ostensibly to look after some lands he claimed, but in reality as a messenger from Lord Dorchester to sound opinion in that region. He claimed to be authorized by Lord Dorchester to offer British aid to an armed force intended to operate against New Orleans. *Wilkinson to Miro*, 12 February, 1789. He had conferences with Wilkinson, Thomas Marshall, George Muter, and Charles Scott, and returning to Detroit,

a perseverance in temperate measures and good dispositions will produce such a system of national policy as shall be mutually advantageous to all parts of the American republic. I am, Sir, with much esteem, yours, &c.

TO CAPTAIN RICHARD CONWAY.

MOUNT VERNON, 4 March, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

Never till within these two years have I ever experienced the want of money. Short crops, and other causes not entirely within my controul, make me feel it now very sensibly. To collect money without the intervention of Suits, (and these are tedious,) seems impracticable—and Land, which I have offered

gave his employer the impression that a British protectorate might be made useful to check the efforts of Spain to win over the Kentuckians, and that a British party could be fostered in the west. Miro had an idea that his commercial agreements with Wilkinson had established a Spanish hold that could not be shaken, and Gardoqui, with his scheme of Morgan's colony and free port, thought he had for the time smoothed over the irritation that the Kentuckians had shown at the iron restrictions that the colonial policy of Spain had imposed on her trade. France, also, was in possession of a suggestion that might bear fruit: to secure from Spain the peaceable cession of New Orleans, and so come between the resentments of the Americans and Spaniards with a grant of privileges advantageous to all concerned. An end was put to this intriguing by Washington's election to the presidency.

"Judgment, impartiality, and decision are conspicuous in every transaction of the President, and from the appointments which he has made, there is every reason to expect that the different departments will be conducted with justice and ability. I consider the appointment of Mr. Jefferson (vice Jay) as a measure favorable to the interests of the Western Country, and calculated to remove those fears which exist respecting the navigation of the river Mississippi. I am fully convinced that we have nothing to fear on that score from the President. This I speak from a knowledge of his sentiments."—*John Brown to Harry Innes*, 28 September, 1789.

for sale, will not command Cash at an undervalue, if at all. Under this statement, I am inclined to do what I never expected to be driven to, that is, to borrow money on Interest. Five hundred pounds would enable me to discharge what I owe in Alexandria, &c., and to leave the State (if it shall not be in my power to remain at home in retirement) without doing this, would be exceedingly disagreeable to me. Having thus fully and candidly explained myself, permit me to ask if it is in your power to supply me with the above or a smaller Sum. Any security you may best like I can give, and you may be assured, that it is no more my inclination than it can be yours, to let it remain long unpaid. Could I get in one fourth part of what is due to me on Bonds, or sell any of the Landed property which I am inclined to dispose of, I could do it with ease; but independently of these, my rents and Crops would soon enable me to do it, provided I am *tolerably* successful in the latter, and have common justice done me in the former. Your answer will much oblige yours, &c.[1]

TO BENJAMIN HARRISON.

MOUNT VERNON, 9 March, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

My friendship is not in the least lessened by the difference, which has taken place in our political sentiments, nor is my regard for you diminished by the

[1] The loan was increased by one hundred pounds, to enable Washington to go to New York.

part you have acted. Men's minds are as variant as their faces, and, where the motives to their actions are pure, the operation of the former is no more to be imputed to them as a crime, than the appearance of the latter; for both, being the work of nature, are equally unavoidable. Liberality and charity, instead of clamor and misrepresentation (which latter only serve to foment the passions without enlightening the understanding), ought to govern in all disputes about matters of importance. Whether the former have appeared in some of the leaders of opposition, the impartial world will decide.

According to report, your individual endeavors to prevent inflammatory measures from being adopted, redound greatly to your credit. The reasons, my dear Sir, why I have not written to you for a long time are two; first, because I found it an insupportable task to answer the letters, which were written to me, and, at the same time, to pay that attention to my private concerns which they required, and there being lately little besides politics worthy of notice; secondly, because I did not incline to appear as a partisan in the interesting subject, that has agitated the public mind since the date of my last letter to you. For it was my sincere wish, that the constitution, which had been submitted to the people, might, after a fair and dispassionate investigation, stand or fall according to its merits or demerits. Besides, I found from disagreeable experience, that almost all the sentiments extracted from me in

answer to private letters, or communicated orally, by some means or another found their way into the public gazettes, as well as some other sentiments ascribed to me, which never had an existence in my imagination.

In touching upon the more delicate part of your letter, (the communication of which fills me with real concern,) I will deal by you with all that frankness, which is due to friendship, and which I wish should be a characteristic feature in my conduct through life. I will therefore declare to you, that, if it should be my inevitable fate to administer the government, (for Heaven knows, that no event can be less desired by me, and that no earthly consideration short of so general a call, together with a desire to reconcile contending parties as far as in me lies, could again bring me into public life,) I will go to the chair under no pre-engagement of any kind or nature whatsoever. But, when in it, I will, to the best of my judgment, discharge the duties of the office with that impartiality and zeal for the public good, which ought never to suffer connections of blood or friendship to intermingle so as to have the least sway on decisions of a public nature. I may err, notwithstanding my most strenuous efforts to execute the difficult trust with fidelity and unexceptionably; but my errors shall be of the head, not of the heart. For all recommendations for appointments, so far as they may depend upon or come from me, a due regard shall be had to the fitness of characters, the pretensions of different candidates, and, so far as is proper,

to political considerations. These shall be invariably my governing motives.[1]

You will perceive, then, my dear Sir, that I cannot with propriety say any thing more on the subject, than that several applications have been made to me for the *office immediately in question* without having received any answer. I wish you had pursued the policy, which the gentleman who now occupies it has

[1] To another application for office from a foreigner, Samuel Vaughan, he wrote :

" From the moment when the necessity had become more apparent, and as it were inevitable, I anticipated, with a heart filled with distress, the ten thousand embarrassments, perplexities, and troubles, to which I must again be exposed in the evening of a life already nearly consumed in public cares. Among all these anxieties, I will not conceal from you, I anticipated none greater, than those that were likely to be produced by applications for appointments to the different offices, which would be created under the new government. Nor will I conceal, that my apprehensions have already been but too well justified. Scarcely a day passes, in which applications of one kind or another do not arrive ; insomuch that, had I not early adopted some general principles, I should before this time have been wholly occupied in this business. As it is, I have found the number of answers, which I have been necessitated to give in my own hand, an almost insupportable burden to me.

" The points in which all these answers have agreed in substance are, that, should it be my lot to go again into public office, I would go without being under any possible engagements of any nature whatsoever ; that, so far as I knew my own heart, I would not be in the remotest degree influenced, in making nominations, by motives arising from the ties of family or blood ; and that, on the other hand, three things, in my opinion, ought principally to be regarded, namely, the fitness of characters to fill offices, the comparative claims from the former merits and sufferings in service of the different candidates, and the distribution of appointments in as equal a proportion as might be to persons belonging to the different States in the Union. Without precautions of this kind, I clearly foresaw the endless jealousies, and possibly the fatal consequences, to which a government, depending altogether on the good will of the people for its establishment, would certainly be exposed in its early stages. Besides, I thought, whatever the effect might be in pleasing or displeasing any individuals at the present moment, a due concern for my own reputation, not less decisively than a sacred regard to the interests of the com-

done, of obtaining the appointment from the executive of this State. Although that gentleman was an officer, yet he is quite unknown to me, and therefore I cannot speak at all upon the ground of comparative claims of personal merits. I conceive, however, it will be found no pleasant thing, possibly very much the reverse, to displace one man under these circum-

munity, required, that I should hold myself absolutely at liberty to act, while in office, with a sole reference to justice and the public good.

"The limits of a letter would not suffice to describe the difficulties, which I fear might occur in conferring important offices upon persons, however meritorious they may really be, who have resided but a little time, and are consequently but little known, in America. A single disgust, excited in a particular State, on this account, might perhaps raise a flame of opposition, that could not easily, if ever, be extinguished. For the fact, I apprehend, will be found to be, that there will be at least a hundred competitors for every office of any kind of importance. Indeed, the number of offices will, in our economical management of the affairs of the republic, be much fewer, as I conceive, and the pretensions of those who may wish to occupy them much more forcible, than many well informed men have imagined. At all events, so much I can with truth declare, that several of the candidates, who have already come forward, have claims to the public attention and gratitude, which cannot be set aside without a palpable act of injustice. Some of them are men of unquestionable talents, who have wasted the flower of their lives in the civil or military service of their country; men, who have materially injured their properties, and excluded themselves from obtaining a subsistence for their families by the professions they were accustomed to pursue. There are some, I may add, who have shed their blood, and deserved all that a grateful country has to bestow. Nor are they, in my judgment, incapable of reflecting lustre on the most dignified stations.

"I have no conception of a more delicate task, than that which is imposed by the constitution on the executive. It is the nature of republicans, who are nearly in a state of equality, to be extremely jealous as to the disposal of all honorary or lucrative appointments. Perfectly convinced I am, that, if injudicious or unpopular measures should be taken by the executive under the new government, with regard to appointments, the government itself would be in the utmost danger of being utterly subverted by those measures. So necessary is it at this crisis to conciliate the good will of the people, and so impossible is it, in my judgment, to build the edifice of public happiness but upon their affections. Your good sense and native candor must serve me as an apology for being thus explicit."—March 21st.

stances of actual occupancy, merely to make room for another, however considerable his abilities, or unimpeached his integrity may appear to the public eye.[1]

Mrs. Washington joins me in every good wish for Mrs. Harrison and your family.

I am, Sir, &c.

TO GEORGE STEPTOE WASHINGTON.

MOUNT VERNON, 23 March, 1789.

DEAR GEORGE,

As it is probable I shall soon be under the necessity of quitting this place, and entering once more into the bustle of publick life, in conformity to the voice of my Country and the earnest entreaties of my friends, however contrary it is to my own desires or inclinations; I think it incumbent on me as your Uncle and friend, to give you some advisory hints, which if properly attended to, will, I conceive, be found very useful to you in regulating your conduct and giving you respectability not only at present but through every period of life. You have now arrived to that age when you must quit the trifling amusements of a boy, and assume the more dignified manners of a man.

At this crisis your conduct will attract the notice of those who are about you; and as the first impres-

[1] The office wanted was that of naval officer of the District of Portsmouth and Norfolk. Col. Parker had just resigned it, to take his seat in Congress, and the Virginia Council had chosen Capt. William Lindsay to succeed him.

sions are generally the most lasting ; your doings now may mark the leading traits of your character through life. It is therefore, absolutely necessary, if you mean to make any figure upon the stage, that you should take the first steps right. What these steps are and what general line is to be pursued to lay the foundation of an honorable and happy progress, is the part of age and experience to point out. This I shall do, as far as in my power with the utmost chearfulness ; and, I trust, that your own good sense will shew you the necessity of following it. The first and great object with you at present is to acquire, by industry and application, such knowledge as your situation enables you to obtain, as will be useful to you in life. In doing this two other important objects will be gained besides the acquisition of knowledge —namely a habit of industry, and a disrelish of that profusion of money and dissipation of time which are ever attendant upon idleness. I do not mean by a close application to your studies that you should never enter into those amusements which are suited to your age and station. They may be made to go hand in hand with each other, and used in their proper seasons, will ever be found to be a mutual assistance to each other. But what amusements are to be taken, and when, is the great matter to be attended to—your own judgement, with the advice of your real friends who may have an opportunity of a personal intercourse with you can point out the particular manner in which you may *best* spend your moments of relaxation, much better than I can at a

distance.—One thing, however, I would strongly impress upon you, viz: that when you have leisure, to go into company; that it should always be of the best kind that the place you are in will afford; by this means you will be constantly improving your manners and cultivating your mind while you are relaxing from your books; and good company will always be found much less expensive than bad. You cannot offer, as an excuse for not using it, that you cannot gain admission there, or that you have not a proper attention paid you in it, this is an apology made only, by those whose manners are disgusting, or whose character is exceptionable; neither of which, I hope will ever be said of you. I cannot enjoin too strongly upon you a due observance of economy and frugality: As you well know yourself, the present state of your property and finances will not admit of any unnecessary expense. The article of clothing is *now* one of the chief expenses, you will incur; and in this, I fear, you are not so economical as you should be. Decency and cleanliness will always be the first object in the dress of a judicious and sensible man. A conformity to the prevailing fashion in a certain degree is necessary—but it does not follow from thence that a man should always get a new coat, or other clothes, upon every trifling change in the mode, when, perhaps he has two or three very good ones by him. A person who is anxious to be a leader of the fashion, or one of the first to follow it, will certainly appear in the eyes of judicious men, to have nothing better than a frequent c[h]ange of dress to recommend hi to notice.

I would always wish you to appear sufficiently decent to entitle you to admission into any company, where you may be,—but I cannot too strongly enjoin it upon you—and your own knowledge must convince you of the truth of it—that you should be as little expensive in this respect as you properly can—You should always keep some clothes to wear to church, or on particular occasions, which should not be worn every day. This can be done without any additional expense; for whenever it is necessary to get new clothes, those which have been kept for particular occasions, will then come in as every day ones, unless they should be of a superior quality to the new. What I have said with respect to clothes will apply perhaps more pointedly to Lawrence than to you,—and as you are much older than he is, and more capable of judging of the propriety of what I have here observed, you must pay attention to him, in this respect, and see that he does not wear his clothes improperly or extravagantly. Much more might be said to you, as a young man, upon the necessity of paying due attention to the moral virtues,—but this may, perhaps, more properly be the subject of a future letter when you are about to enter into the world. If you comply with the advice herein given, to pay a diligent attention to your studies, and employ your time of relaxation in proper company, you will find but few opportunities and little inclination, while you continue at an Acadimy, to enter into those scenes of vice and dissipation which too often present themselves to youth in every place, and particularly in towns. If you are determined to

neglect your books, and plunge into extravagance and dissipation nothing that I can now say would prevent it,—for you must be employed, and if it is not in pursuit of those things profitable, it must be in pursuit of those which are ——. As your time of continuing with Mr. Hanson expires the last of this month and I understand that Doctor Craik has expressed an inclination to take you and Lawrence to board with him, I shall know his determination respecting the matter,—and if it is agreeable to him and Mrs. Craik to take you I shall be pleased with it; for I am certain that nothing will be wanting on their part to make your situation agreeable and useful to you. Should you live with the Doctor, I shall request him to take you both under his peculiar care —provide such clothes for you from time to time, as he shall judge necessary,—and do by you in the same manner as he would if you were his own children: which if he will undertake, I am sensible, from knowledge which I have of him, and the very amiable character and disposition of Mrs. Craik, that they will spare no proper exertions to make your situation pleasing and profitable to you. Should you or Lawrence therefore behave in such a manner as to occasion any complaint being made to me, you may depend upon losing that place which you now have in my affections, and any future hope you may have from me. But if, on the contrary, your conduct is such as to merit my regard you may always depend upon the warmest attachment and sincere regard of

Your affectionate friend and Uncle.

TO JAMES MADISON, IN CONGRESS.

MOUNT VERNON, 30 March, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have been favored with your letter of the 19th, by which it appears that a quorum of Congress was hardly to be expected before the beginning of the next week. As this delay must be very irksome to the attending members, and every day's continuance of it, before the government is in operation, will be more sensibly felt, I am resolved, that none shall proceed from me that can well be avoided, after notice of the election is announced, and therefore I take the liberty of requesting the favor of you to engage lodgings for me previous to my arrival.

Mr. Lear, who has lived with me three years as a private secretary, will accompany or precede me in the stage; and Colonel Humphreys I presume will be of my party. On the subject of lodgings, I will frankly declare to you, that I mean to go into none but hired ones. If these cannot be had tolerably convenient (for I shall not be nice about them), I would take rooms in the most decent tavern, till a house can be provided for the more permanent reception of the President. I have already declined a very polite and pressing invitation from the Governor to lodge at his house, till a place could be prepared for me; after which, should any other offer of a similar nature be made, there could be no propriety in my acceptance of it. As you are fully acquainted with my sentiments on this head, I shall only add, that, as I mean to avoid private families on the one hand, so on the

other I am not anxious to be placed early in a situation for entertaining; for which reason private lodgings, till I can feel the way a little, would not only be more agreeable to my own wishes, but possibly more consistent with sound policy.[1]

As it is my intention to conform to the public desire and expectation with respect to the style proper for the President to live in, it may be well to know what these are before he enters upon it. After all, something may perhaps have been decided upon before this will reach you, that may make the request nugatory. If otherwise, I will only in one word say, that my wish is to be placed in an independent situation for the purpose I have mentioned. I have the honor to be, with sentiments of the highest regard, &c.

TO THOMAS GREEN.[2]

THOMAS GREEN, MOUNT VERNON, 31 March, 1789.

I am about to leave my home whether for a length of time is more than I can tell at present.—But be this as it may I expect the agreement to which we

[1] Both Governor Clinton and John Jay invited Washington to stay with them on his arrival in New York. To Clinton he replied, 25 March, 1789:

"I shall make it a point to take hired lodgings or rooms in a tavern until some house can be provided. Because it would be wrong, in my real judgment, to impose such a burden on any private family, as must unavoidably be occasioned by my company; and because I think it would be generally expected, that, being supported by the public at large, I should not be burdensome to individuals. With respect to the other part of your letter, which is expressive of a wish to be apprized of the time of my approach to the city, I can assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that no reception can be so congenial to my feelings as a quiet entry devoid of ceremony, be the manner of it what it may."

[2] "A Rough and incorrect Draught of a letter."—*Note by Washington.*

have subscribed, will be as strictly complied with on your part as it shall be punctually fulfilled on mine. To enable you to do this, you would do well to keep two things always in remembrance—First that all Bargains are intended, for the mutual benefit of and are equally binding on both the Parties, and are either binding in all their parts or are of no use at all—If then a man receives for his labor, and he with holds that labor, or if he trifles away that time for which he is paid, it is a robbery—and a robbery of the worst kind, because it is not only a fraud but a dishonorable, unmanly and a deceitful fraud ;—but it is unnecessary to dwell on this because there is no Man so ignorant of the common obligations of Justice, as not to know it—altho' there are hundreds who do not scruple to practice it, at the same time that they would think hard, on the other hand, if they were to be deprived of their money. The other matter which I advise you to keep always in remembrance is the good name, which common policy as well as common honesty, makes it necessary for every workman who wishes to pass thro' life with reputation and to secure employment. Having said thus much by way of exhortation I shall inform you in the most serious and positive terms that I have left strict orders with the Major my nephew, who is vested with full powers to transact all my business, that if he should find you unfaithful to your engagements, either from the love of liquor, from a disposition to be running about, or from proneness to idle when at your work—to discard you immediately, and to remove your family from

their present abode. The sure means to avoid this evil is—first to refrain from drink which is the source of all evil—and the ruin of half the workmen in this Country—and next to avoid bad company, which is the bane of good morals, economy and industry. You have every inducement to do this—Reputation—the care and support of a growing family—and society which this family affords within your own doors, which may not be the case with some of the idle (to say nothing worse of them) characters who may lead you into temptation. Were you to look back, and had the means, either from recollection, or accounts, to ascertain the cost of the liquor you have expended it would astonish you—In the manner this expence is generally incurred, that is by getting a little now—a little then, the impropriety of it is not seen, in as much as it passes away without much thought. But view it in the aggregate you will be convinced at once, whether any man who depends upon the labor of his hands, not only for his own support, but that of an encreasing family, can afford such a proportion of his wages to that article. But the expence is not the worst consequence that attends it, for it naturally leads a man into the company of those who encourage dissipation and idleness, by which he is led by degrees to the perpetration of acts which may terminate in his Ruin. But supposing this not to happen, a disordered frame, and a body debilitated, renders him unfit (even if his mind was disposed to discharge the duties of his station with honor to himself or fidelity to his employer)

from the execution of it. An aching head and trembling limbs, which are the inevitable effects of drinking, disincline the hands from work; hence begins sloth and that Listlessness, which end in idleness, but which are no reasons for withholding that labor for which money is paid.

I have no other inducement for giving you this advice (in this my hour of hurry) but your own good; for the wages and previleges which you have I well know would obtain for me the best workmen in this country, without the charges of such a family as yours; but as it has been a custom with me through life to give a preference to those who have long lived with me, and my wish to see them do well, I have taken the trouble of writing you this letter. If you have gratitude, or a mind capable of reflection, it will make such an impression on it as may be serviceable to you thro life; if not, I have my labor for my pains.

Whilst the negro carpenters work at the same spot where you are, they will be subject to your inspection and orders—and at other times if it should be found necessary to put them under yr. care it will be expected that you see that they do their duty. I am, &c.[1]

[1] The patience of Washington was sorely tried by Green, and subsequently an annual contract appears to have been made between them. The last contract was made 2 October, 1793, by which Green and his four negro carpenters were to receive £10 a month and certain articles of food, and Green engaged never to be away while his people were at work, and he in health, or be absent without permission. "And whereas it too often happens that men (regardless of their engagements and of course their reputation) when working on standing wages, are apt to be idle, careless and indifferent to the interest of their employers, thereby setting the reverse of good examples, it is hereby clearly understood and expressly agreed to by the said Thomas Green, that he will be at his business as soon as it is light, and remain thereat until dark,

TO HENRY KNOX.

MOUNT VERNON, 1 April, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

The mail of the 30th brought me your favor of the 23d, by which, and the regular information you have had the goodness to transmit to me of the state of things in New York, I am very much obliged, and thank you accordingly.

I feel for those members of the new Congress, who hitherto have given an unavailing attendance at the theatre of action. For myself the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I tell you, (with the *world* it would obtain little credit,) that my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution; so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible that I am embarking the voice of the

when he is in health; and when not employed in laying out, or marking off work for others, that he will labor as faithfully, and as effectually as any hand under him; as well for the purpose of fulfilling this agreement as for the good example he would set by so doing to those who are under his care, and who are not so ignorant (knowing this is required of him) as not to relax as he relaxes, and be idle in proportion as he is idle; because all of them have discernment enough to know that no man can, with propriety, or a good conscience, correct others for a fault he is guilty of himself; the consequence of which is, that indolence and sloth take possession of the whole."—*Agreement.* In February, 1794, Washington wrote to Pearce, his overseer, that he had become convinced of Green's unfitness to look after his carpenters, that only the helpless condition of the family had prevailed to retain him so long, and that a change must be made. Green, in September, left of his own accord.

people, and a good name of my own, on this voyage; but what returns will be made for them, Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness are all I can promise. These, be the voyage long or short, shall never forsake me, although I may be deserted by all men; for of the consolations, which are to be derived from these, under any circumstances, the world cannot deprive me. I am &c.[1]

TO JOHN LANGDON.

SIR, MOUNT VERNON, 14 April, 1789.

I had the honor to receive your official communication, by the hand of Mr. Secretary Thomson, about one o'clock this day. Having concluded to obey the important and flattering call of my country, and having been impressed with an idea of the expediency of my being with Congress at as early a period as possible, I propose to commence my journey on Thursday morning, which will be the day after tomorrow. I have the honor to be, with sentiments of esteem, Sir, &c.[2]

[1] The day appointed for the assembling of Congress was the 4th of March; but so tardily did the members come together, that a quorum of both Houses was not formed until the 6th of April. "The stupor or listlessness, with which our public measures seem to be pervaded, is to me a matter of deep regret. Indeed it has so strange an appearance, that I cannot but wonder how men, who are anxious to get into office or who are ever prevailed upon to accept it, can reconcile such conduct with their sense of propriety. The delay is inauspicious to say the least of it, and the world must condemn it."— *Washington to Knox*, 10 April, 1789.

[2] On the 6th of April, when the electoral votes were opened, it appeared that Washington was unanimously chosen President of the United States. With marked fitness, Charles Thomson was appointed to notify Washington of the

INAUGURAL SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, APRIL 30TH, 1789.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE
AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxieties, than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the 14th day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and, in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years ; a retreat which was rendered every day more necessary as well as more dear to me, by the addition of habit to inclination, and of frequent interruptions in my health to the gradual waste committed on it by time. On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust, to which the voice of my country called me, being sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications, could not but overwhelm with despondence one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature, and unpractised in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver is, that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be affected. All I dare hope is, that, if in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility

result. On April 14th he reached Mount Vernon and in a few words performed the object of his mission. In reply the President-elect said :

" I have been accustomed to pay so much respect to the opinion of my fellow citizens, that the knowledge of their having given their unanimous suffrages in my favor scarcely leaves me the alternative for an option. I cannot, I believe, give a greater evidence of my sensibility to the honor, which they have done me, than by accepting the appointment.

" I am so much affected by this fresh proof of my country's esteem and confidence, that silence can best explain my gratitude. While I realize the arduous nature of the task, which is imposed upon me, and feel my own inability to perform it, I wish that there may not be reason for regretting the choice ; for,

to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens; and have thence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me; my

indeed, all I can promise is only to accomplish that, which can be done by an honest zeal."

Recognizing the importance of being in New York at an early day, that there might be no delay in organizing the new executive, he set out from Mount Vernon on April 16th, recording in his *Diary:* "About ten o'clock, I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thomson and Colonel Humphreys, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations." The incidents attending his journey to the seat of government and his inauguration are so fully described in the volume commemorative of the celebration in 1889, as to make even a summary unnecessary. On the 30th of April the oath of office was administered by the Chancellor of New York, and an address delivered to both Houses of Congress. Three contemporary records may be quoted. The following account is from a manuscript *Diary* kept by Mr. Lear, who was at that time the President's secretary:

"*April 30th.*—The morning was employed in making such arrangements as were necessary for the ceremonies of the day. At nine o'clock all the churches in the city were opened, and prayers offered up to the Great Ruler of the universe for the preservation of the President. At twelve the troops of the city paraded before our door, and, soon after, the committees of Congress and heads of departments came in their carriages to wait upon the President to the Federal Hall. At half past twelve the procession moved forward, the troops marching in front with all the ensigns of military parade. Next came the committees and heads of departments in their carriages. Next the President in the state coach, and Colonel Humphreys and myself in the President's own carriage. The foreign ministers and a long train of citizens brought up the rear.

"About two hundred yards before we reached the hall, we descended from our carriages, and passed through the troops, who were drawn up on each side, into the Hall and Senate-chamber, where we found the Vice-President, the Senate, and House of Representatives assembled. They received the President in the most respectful manner, and the Vice-President conducted him to a spacious and elevated seat at the head of the room. A solemn silence prevailed. The Vice-President soon arose and informed the President, that all things were prepared to administer the oath whenever he should see fit to proceed to the balcony and receive it. He immediately descended from his seat, and advanced through the middle door of the Hall to the balcony. The others passed through the doors on each side. The oath was administered in public by Chancellor Livingston; and, the moment the chancellor proclaimed him Presi-

error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

---

dent of the United States, the air was rent by repeated shouts and huzzas,— '*God bless our Washington! Long live our beloved President!*' We again returned into the Hall, where, being seated as before for a few moments, the President arose and addressed the two branches of Congress in a speech, which was heard with eager and marked attention.

"After the President had finished his speech, we proceeded from the Senate-chamber, on foot to St. Paul's church, in the same order that we had observed in our carriages, where the bishop read prayers suited to the occasion. We were then met at the church door by our carriages, and we went home.

"In the evening there was a display of most beautiful fire-works and transparent paintings at the Battery. The President, Colonel Humphreys, and myself went in the beginning of the evening in the carriages to Chancellor Livingston's and General Knox's, where we had a full view of the fire-works. We returned home at ten on foot, the throng of people being so great as not to permit a carriage to pass through it."

Fisher Ames noted: "I was present in the pew with the President, and must assure you that, after making all deductions for the delusion of one's fancy in regard to characters, I still think of him with more veneration than for any other person. Time has made havoc upon his face. That, and many other circumstances not to be reasoned about, conspire to keep up the awe which I brought with me. He addressed the two Houses in the Senate-chamber; it was a very touching scene, and quite of a solemn kind. His aspect grave, almost to sadness; his modesty, actually shaking; his voice deep, a little tremulous, and so low as to call for close attention; added to the series of objects presented to the mind, and overwhelming it, produced emotions of the most affecting kind upon the members."

Senator McClay gave another account: "This great man was agitated and embarrassed more than he was by the levelled cannon or pointed musket. He trembled, and several times could scarce make out to read, though it must be supposed he had often read it before. He put part of the fingers of his left hand into the side of what I think the tailors call the fall of the breeches, changing the paper into his left [right?] hand. After some time, he then did the same thing with some of the fingers of his right hand. When he came to the words 'all the world,' he made a flourish with his right hand, which left rather an ungainly impression. I, for my part, wished all set ceremony in the hands of the dancing masters, and that this first of men had read off his address in the plainest manner without ever taking his eyes from the paper, for I felt hurt that he was not first in every thing. He was dressed in deep brown, with metal buttons, with an eagle on them, white stockings, a bag, and sword."

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency. And, in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted, cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none, under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.

By the article establishing the executive department, it is made the duty of the President "to recommend to your consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient." The circumstances, under which I now meet you, will acquit me from entering into that subject farther than to refer you to the great constitutional charter under which we are assembled; and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which

your attention is to be given. It will be more consistent with those circumstances, and far more congenial with the feelings which actuate me, to substitute, in place of a recommendation of particular measures, the tribute that is due to the talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism, which adorn the characters selected to devise and adopt them. In these honorable qualifications I behold the surest pledges, that as, on one side, no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views or party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye, which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests; so, on another, that the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of a free government be exemplified by all the attributes, which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world.

I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction, which an ardent love for my country can inspire; since there is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as *deeply*, perhaps as *finally* staked, on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people.

Besides the ordinary objects submitted to your care, it will remain with your judgment to decide, how far an exercise of the occasional power delegated by the fifth article of the Constitution is rendered expedient at the present juncture by the nature of objections which have been urged against the system, or by the degree of inquietude which has given birth to them. Instead of undertaking particular recommendations on this subject, in which I could be guided by no lights derived from official

opportunities, I shall again give way to my entire confidence in your discernment and pursuit of the public good; for I assure myself, that, whilst you carefully avoid every alteration, which might endanger the benefits of a united and effective government, or which ought to await the future lessons of experience; a reverence for the characteristic rights of freemen, and a regard for the public harmony, will sufficiently influence your deliberations on the question, how far the former can be more impregnably fortified, or the latter be safely and advantageously promoted.

To the preceding observations I have one to add, which will be most properly addressed to the House of Representatives. It concerns myself, and will therefore be as brief as possible. When I was first honored with a call into the service of my country, then on the eve of an arduous struggle for its liberties, the light in which I contemplated my duty required, that I should renounce every pecuniary compensation. From this resolution I have in no instance departed. And being still under the impressions which produced it, I must decline as inapplicable to myself any share in the personal emoluments, which may be indispensably included in a permanent provision for the executive department; and must accordingly pray, that the pecuniary estimates for the station in which I am placed may, during my continuance in it, be limited to such actual expenditures as the public good may be thought to require.

Having thus imparted to you my sentiments, as they have been awakened by the occasion which brings us together, I shall take my present leave; but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the human race, in humble supplication, that, since he has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquillity, and dispositions for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the security of their union and the advancement of their happiness; so his divine blessing may be equally *conspicuous* in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures, on which the success of this government must depend.

REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE SENATE.

GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for your address, in which the most affectionate sentiments are expressed in the most obliging terms. The coincidence of circumstances, which led to this auspicious crisis, the confidence reposed in me by my fellow-citizens, and the assistance I may expect from counsels, which will be dictated by an enlarged and liberal policy, seem to presage a more prosperous issue to my administration, than a diffidence of my abilities had taught me to anticipate. I now feel myself inexpressibly happy in a belief, that Heaven, which has done so much for our infant nation, will not withdraw its providential influence before our political felicity shall have been completed; and in a conviction that the Senate will at all times co-operate in every measure which may tend to promote the welfare of this confederated republic.

Thus supported by a firm trust in the great Arbiter of the universe, aided by the collected wisdom of the Union, and imploring the divine benediction on our joint exertions in the service of our country, I readily engage with you in the arduous but pleasing task of attempting to make a nation happy.

REPLY TO THE ANSWER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

GENTLEMEN,

Your very affectionate address produces emotions, which I know not how to express. I feel, that my past endeavors in the service of my country are far overpaid by its goodness; and I fear much, that my future ones may not fulfil your kind anticipation. All that I can promise is, that they will be invariably directed by an honest and an ardent zeal. Of this resource my heart assures me. For all beyond, I rely on the wisdom and patriotism of those with whom I am to co-operate, and a continuance of the blessings of Heaven on our beloved country.[1]

[1] The form of these speeches was that used by the colonial governors in addressing the colonial assemblies, but was later set aside in favor of a single

TO EDWARD RUTLEDGE.

NEW YORK, 5 May, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot fail of being much pleased with the friendly part you take in every thing which concerns me; and particularly with the just scale on which you estimate this last great sacrifice, which I consider myself as having made for the good of my country. When I had judged, upon the best appreciation I was able to form of the circumstances which related to myself, that it was my duty to embark again on the tempestuous and uncertain ocean of public life, I gave up all expectations of private happiness in this world. You know, my dear Sir, I had concentered all my schemes, all my views, all my wishes, within the narrow circle of domestic enjoyment. Though I flatter myself the world will do me the justice to believe, that at any time of life and in my circumstances, nothing but a conviction of duty could have induced me to depart from my resolution of remaining in retirement; yet I greatly apprehend that my Countrymen will expect too much from me. I fear, if the

message to which no replies by the respective houses of Congress were given. The President had consulted Madison on the replies:

"Notwithstanding the conviction I am under of the labor which is imposed upon you by Public Individuals as well as public bodies—yet as you have begun, so I would wish you to finish, the good work in a short reply to the Addresses of the House of Representatives (which I now inclose) that there may be an accordance in this business.

"Thursday 12 o'clock, I have appointed to receive the Addresses.—The proper plan is with the House to determine.—As the first of every thing, in *our situation* which serve to establish a Precedent, it is devoutly wished on my part, that these precedents may be fixed on true principles."—*Washington to Madison*, 5 May, 1789.

issue of public measures should not correspond with their sanguine expectations, they will turn the extravagant (and I may say undue) praises which they are heaping upon me at this moment, into equally extravagant (though I will fondly hope unmerited) censures. So much is expected, so many untoward circumstances may intervene, in such a new and critical situation, that I feel an insuperable diffidence in my own abilities—I feel, in the execution of the duties of my arduous office, how much I shall stand in need of the countenance and aid of every friend to myself, of every friend to the Revolution, and of every lover of good Government. I thank you, my dear Sir, for your affectionate expressions on this point.

I anticipate that one of the most difficult and delicate parts of the duty of my office will be that which relates to nominations for appointments. I receive with the more satisfaction the strong testimonials in behalf of Mr. Hall, because I hope they will tend to supersede the difficulty in this instance. Though, from a system which I have prescribed to myself, I can say nothing decisive on particular appointments; yet I may be allowed to observe in general, that nothing could be more agreeable to me than to have one candidate brought forward for every office with such clear pretensions as to secure him against competition.[1]

[1] Similar sentiments were expressed in a letter to General Wayne. "My greatest apprehension at present is, that more will be expected from me, than I shall be able to perform. All that an honest zeal can dictate for the advancement of the interests of our country will, however, be cheerfully and perseveringly attempted."—May 4th. And to General Schuyler: "It is only from the assurances of support, which I have received from the respectable and wor-

Mrs. W. is not here, but is shortly expected on her arrival.[1] I will offer the Complts. of Mrs. R. & yourself to her. In the meantime I pray you to believe that I am, with sentiments of the purest esteem & the highest consideration, &c.

TO JAMES MADISON.

NEW YORK, 12 May, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

To draw such a line for the conduct of the President as will please everybody, I know is impossible, but to mark out and follow one, which, by being consonant with reason, will meet general approbation,

thy characters in every part of the Union, that I am enabled to overcome the diffidence, which I have in my own abilities to execute my great and important trust to the best interest of our country. An honest zeal, and an unremitting attention to the interests of the United States, are all that I dare promise."—May 9th. And again to Mr. Jones: "The numerous and friendly congratulations, which I have received from respectable characters in every part of the Union, are truly pleasing to me; not only on account of their discovering a warm attachment to my person, but because they convey the most flattering idea of the good dispositions of the people in the several States, and the strongest assurances of support to the government. It affords me likewise no small satisfaction to find, that my friends have done justice to the motives, which again brought me into public life. Under all these circumstances I shall feel a degree of confidence in discharging the duties of my administration, with which a consciousness alone of the purity of my intentions could not have inspired me."—May 14th. To Robert R. Livingston, after stating the principles which he had adopted for regulating his conduct in regard to appointments, he wrote: "The delicacy with which your letter was written, and your wishes insinuated, did not require me to be thus explicit on this head with you; but the desire which I have, that those persons whose good opinion I value, should know the principles on which I mean to act in this business, has led me to this full declaration, and I trust, that the truly worthy and respectable characters in this country will do justice to the motives by which I am actuated in all my public transactions."—May 31st.

[1] Mrs. Washington did not arrive in New York till May 27th.

may be as practicable as it is desirable. The true medium I conceive must lie in pursuing such a course, as will allow him time for all the official duties of his station. This should be the primary object. The next, to avoid as much as may be the charge of superciliousness, and seclusion from information, by too much reserve and too great a withdraw of himself from company on the one hand, and the inconveniences, as well as a reduction of respectability, from too free an intercourse and too much familiarity on the other.

Under these impressions I have submitted the enclosed queries[1] for your consideration, and would thank you for your sentiments thereon, with the return of the paper. For the remarks which it contains, it is necessary that some plan should be adopted by the President for his mode of living, that the pecuniary estimates for the department may have an eye thereto; and, though *secondary*, it is a motive for my bringing the matter before you at this time. I am your affectionate friend, &c.

QUERIES.

1. Whether a line of conduct, equally distant from an association with all kinds of company on the one hand, and from a total seclusion from society on the other, ought to be adopted by him And in that case, how is it to be done?

2. What will be the least exceptionable method of bringing any system, which may be adopted on this subject, before the public and into use?

3. Whether, after a little time, one day in every week will not be sufficient for receiving visits of compliment?

[1] The queries were also sent to Mr. Jay.

4. Whether it would tend to prompt impertinent applications, and involve disagreeable consequences, to have it known that the President will, every morning at eight o'clock, be at leisure to give audience to persons, who may have business with him?

5. Whether, when it shall have been understood, that the President is not to give general entertainments in the manner the presidents of Congress have formerly done, it will be practicable to draw such a line of discrimination, in regard to persons, as that six, eight, or ten official characters, including in rotation the members of both Houses of Congress, may be invited informally, or otherwise, to dine with him on the days fixed for receiving company, without exciting clamors in the rest of the community?

6. Whether it would be satisfactory to the public for the President to make about four great entertainments in a year, on such great occasions as the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the alliance with France, the peace with Great Britain, the organization of the general government; and whether arrangements of these two last kinds could be in danger of diverting too much of the President's time from business, or of producing the evils, which it was intended to avoid by his living more recluse than the presidents of Congress have heretofore lived?

7. Whether there would be any impropriety in the President's making informal visits; that is to say, in his calling upon his acquaintances or public characters, for the purpose of sociability or civility? And what, as to the form of doing it, might evince these visits to have been made in his private character, so as that they may not be construed into visits from the President of the United States? And in what light would his appearance *rarely* at tea-parties be considered?

8. Whether, during the recess of Congress, it would not be advantageous to the interests of the Union for the President to make the tour of the United States, in order to become better acquainted with their principal characters and internal circumstances, as well as to be more accessible to numbers of well-informed persons, who might give him useful information and advice on political subjects?

9. If there is a probability, that either of the arrangements may take place, which will eventually cause additional expenses,

whether it would not be proper that those ideas should come into contemplation at the time when Congress shall make a permanent provision for the support of the executive?

Remarks. On the one side, no augmentation can be effected in the pecuniary establishment, which shall be made in the first instance for the support of the executive. On the other, all moneys destined to that purpose, beyond the actual expenditures, will be left in the treasury of the United States, or sacredly applied to the promotion of some national objects.

Many things, which appear of little importance in themselves and at the beginning, may have great and durable consequences from their having been established at the commencement of a new general government. It will be much easier to commence the administration upon a well-adjusted system, built on tenable grounds, than to correct errors, or alter inconveniences, after they shall have been confirmed by habit. The President, in all matters of business and etiquette, can have no object but to demean himself in his public character in such a manner as to maintain the dignity of his office, without subjecting himself to the imputation of superciliousness or unnecessary reserve. Under these impressions, he asks for your candid and undisguised opinion.

TO MARY WOOSTER.[1]

NEW YORK, 21 May, 1789.

MADAM,

I have duly received your affecting letter, dated the 8th day of this month. Sympathizing with you as I do in the great misfortunes, which have befallen your family in consequence of the war, my feelings as an individual would forcibly prompt me to do every thing in my power to repair those misfortunes. But as a

[1] The widow of General Wooster, who died of the wounds he received in an action with the enemy when the British made an incursion to Danbury in April, 1777.

public man, acting only with a reference to the public good, I must be allowed to decide upon all points of my duty, without consulting my private inclinations and wishes. I must be permitted, with the best lights I can obtain, and upon a general view of characters and circumstances, to nominate such persons alone to offices, as in my judgment shall be the best qualified to discharge the functions of the departments to which they shall be appointed.

Hitherto I have given no decisive answers to the applications of any candidates whatsoever. Nor would it be proper for me, before offices shall be created, and before I can have a general knowledge of the competitors for them, to say any thing that might be construed as intended to encourage or discourage the hopes, which individuals may have formed of success.[1] I only wish, so far as my agency in this business is concerned, that candidates for offices would save

[1] In no respect was Washington's anxious care more fully shown than in seeking the proper persons for the offices in the new government. "That part of the President's duty which obliges him to nominate persons for office," he wrote to Joseph Jones, 14 May, 1789, "is the most delicate, and in many instances will be, to me, the most unpleasing; for it may frequently happen that there will be several applicants for the same office, whose merits and pretensions are so nearly equal, that it will almost require the aid of supernatural intuition to fix upon the right. I shall, however, in all events, have the consolation of knowing that I entered upon my office unconfined by any engagements, and uninfluenced by any ties; and that no means in my power will be left untried to find out, and nominate those characters who will discharge the duties of their respective offices to the best interests and highest credit of the American Union." That he was sincere in this wish, there will be abundant evidence afforded in these volumes; and that he was successful in his policy is proved by the frequent reference to his administration as the type of a true and honest civil service.

"Conversing on the subject of these appointments [revenue] lately with the P., I mentioned two principles which I had the pleasure to hear him approve

themselves the trouble and consequent expense of personal attendance. All that *I* require is the name and such testimonials with respect to abilities, integrity, and fitness, as it may be in the power of the several applicants to produce. Beyond this, nothing with *me* is necessary, or will be of any avail to them in my decisions. In the mean time I beg you will be persuaded, Madam, that, let the result be whatsoever it may, I can have no interest to promote but that of the public; and that I remain in all personal considerations, with the highest respect, your most obedient servant.

TO COUNT DE MOUSTIER.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

NEW YORK, 25 May, 1789.

SIR,

What circumstances there may be existing between our two nations, to which you allude, on account of

of. The first that State officers in similar lines who had behaved well, deserved preference in the service of the United States; and 2dly, that having discharged these duties undivided, now that they become divided, the same officers were entitled to the best. He assigned some strong reasons in support of both these ideas."—*Richard Henry Lee to* ——, 7 June, 1789.

"You cannot doubt my wishes to see you appointed to any office of honor or emolument in the new government, to the duties of which you are competent; but however deserving you may be of the one you have suggested, your standing at the bar would not justify my nomination of you as attorney to the federal District Court in preference of some of the oldest and most esteemed general court lawyers in your own State, who are desirous of this appointment. My political conduct in nominations, even if I were uninfluenced by principle, must be exceedingly circumspect and proof against just criticism; for the eyes of Argus are upon me, and no slip will pass unnoticed, that can be improved into a supposed partiality for friends or relations."—*Washington to Bushrod Washington*, 27 July, 1789.

their peculiarity I know not. But, as those nations are happily connected in the strictest ties of amity, not less by inclination and interest, than by the solemnity of a treaty, and as the United States are too remote from Europe to take any share in the local politics of that continent, I had concluded, that commerce was the only subject of negotiations, which could at present be very interesting to the inhabitants of the two countries.

In two letters, which I had the pleasure of writing to you before I returned into public life, I stated (if I remember rightly, for I have not the copies of the letters with me), that I was so little acquainted with commercial affairs, that I should very much distrust my own judgment, even in the opinions which I might be obliged to hazard in treating casually of them. *This fact*, if there had been no other circumstance that merited a consideration, *would be a conclusive reason for preventing me individually from entering upon any kind of negotiations on that subject.* For while I find myself incompetent to it, I really believe, that much reciprocal advantage might be acquired, if that subject could be candidly and intelligently managed. This I should hope, too, might be the case; and so far shall I be from throwing any obstacles in the way, that I shall certainly take a great pleasure in removing, (so far as lays in my power,) such as may occur.[1]

[1] Moustier's "commercial ideas are probably neither illiberal nor unfriendly to this country. The contrary has been supposed."—*Madison to Jefferson*, 27 May, 1789.

Every one, who has any knowledge of my manner of acting in public life, will be persuaded that I am not accustomed to impede the despatch or frustrate the success of business by a ceremonious attention to idle forms. Any person of that description will also be satisfied, that I should not readily consent to lose one of the most important functions of my office, for the sake of preserving an imaginary dignity. But perhaps, if there are rules of proceeding, which have originated from the wisdom of statesmen, and are sanctioned by the common consent of nations, it would not be prudent for a young state to dispense with them altogether, at least, without some substantial cause for so doing. I have myself been induced to think, possibly from the habits of experience, that in general the best mode of conducting negotiations, the detail and progress of which might be liable to accidental mistakes, or unintentional misrepresentations, is by writing. This mode, if I was obliged myself to negotiate with any one, I should still pursue. I have, however, been taught to believe, that there is in most polished nations a system established, with regard to the foreign as well as the other great departments, which, from the utility, the necessity, and the reason of the thing, provides, that business should be digested and prepared by the heads of those departments.

The impossibility that one man should be able to perform all the great business of the state, I take to have been the reason for instituting the great departments, and appointing officers therein, to assist the

supreme magistrate in discharging the duties of his trust. And perhaps I may be allowed to say of myself, that the supreme magistrate of no state can have a greater variety of important business to perform in person, than I have at this moment. Very many things will doubtless occur to you, Sir, as being incident to the office of President in the commencement of the government, which cannot be done by the intervention of a third person. You will give me leave to say, likewise, that no third person (were there a disposition for it) shall ever have it in his power to erect a wall between me and the diplomatic corps, that is to say, to prevent necessary communications. Nor has anybody insinuated, that it would be beneath the dignity of a President of the United States occasionally to transact business with a foreign minister. But in what light the public might view the establishment of a precedent for negotiating the business of a department, without any agency of the head of the department, who was appointed for that very purpose, I do not at present pretend to determine; nor whether a similar practice in that case must not of right be extended hereafter to all diplomatic characters of the same rank.

Here you will be pleased to observe, Sir, that I am writing as General Washington to the Count de Moustier. Happy am I, that my regard for yourself and your nation is so far from being equivocal, that I have had several occasions of making it known to you, both in conversation and writing. And I hope you will consider this confidential letter as an evidence of

the extreme regret, which I should feel, in being obliged to decline any propositions, as to the mode of doing business, from a person who has so many titles to my esteem as the Count de Moustier.

I will only add, that, under my present impressions, I cannot persuade myself, that I should be justifiable in deviating essentially from established forms. With the highest sentiments of esteem and regard,

I am, Sir, &c.

TO MATHEW CAREY.

NEW YORK, 29 May, 1789.

SIR,

In the course of my whole existence, I never before have been made the subject of such extraordinary conduct as that which I have been obliged to suffer by your sending to me unsealed, through a public conveyance, my letter of the 22d and yours of the 27th of this month.

After the *candid* and my heart witnessed for me no unfriendly part I had always acted towards you, I hoped for the credit of human nature, at least to have escaped an intentional insult. I am, &c.[1]

[1] "In addition to what I wrote to you formerly on the subject of a loan, I now inform you (and desire that *this letter* which conveys the information may be destroyed so soon as it is read) that my utmost exertions were ineffectually used to borrow a sum of money (even at a high interest, and for me on disadvantageous terms) to comply with contracts of my own before I left Virginia. Having made this communication it is unnecessary to adduce further proof of my inability to comply with the request which is contained in your letter of the 18th instant."—*Washington to Carey*, 22 May, 1789.

TO THE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.[1]

NEW YORK, 8 June, 1789.

SIR,

Although in the present unsettled state of the executive departments, under the government of the Union, I do not conceive it expedient to call upon you for information officially, yet I have supposed, that some informal communications from the office of foreign affairs might neither be improper or unprofitable. For finding myself at this moment less occupied with the duties of my office, than I shall probably be at almost any time hereafter, I am desirous of employing myself in obtaining an acquaintance with the real situation of the several great departments, at the period of my acceding to the administration of the general government. For this purpose I wish to receive in writing such a clear account of the department, at the head of which you have been for some years past, as may be sufficient (without overburdening or confusing the mind, which has very many

[1] The secretaries of the several executive departments under the new government were not appointed till September. In the meantime the usual business of the departments was transacted by the officers who had charge of them when the old government expired. Mr. Jay continued to fill the office of secretary of foreign affairs, till Mr. Jefferson entered upon its duties in March, 1790. The name of the department was changed by law to that of the *Department of State*, and its head was thenceforward called Secretary of State. General Knox acted as Secretary of War, till his new appointment to the same post, on the 12th of September, 1789. The affairs of the treasury were administered by a Board, consisting of Samuel Osgood, Walter Livingston, and Arthur Lee. These gentlemen retained their places till September 11th, when Hamilton was appointed Secretary of the Treasury. The reason why the appointments were so long delayed was, that the laws instituting the departments, and fixing the salaries of the officers, were not sooner passed by Congress.

objects to claim its attention at the same instant,) to impress me with a full, precise, and distinct general idea of the affairs of the United States, so far as they are comprehended in, or connected with, that department.

As I am now at leisure to inspect such papers and documents, as may be necessary to be acted upon hereafter, or as may be calculated to give me an insight into the business and duties of that department, I have thought fit to address this notification to you accordingly. I am, &c.[1]

TO JAMES McHENRY.

NEW YORK, 3 July, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I have received your very friendly letter of the 28th of June, and feel a grateful sense of the interest which you take in my welfare and happiness, and the kind solicitude, which you express for the recovery of my health. I have now the pleasure to inform you, that my health is restored, but a feebleness still hangs upon me, and I am yet much incommoded by the incision, which was made in a very large and painful tumor on the protuberance of my thigh. This prevents me from walking or sitting. However, the physicians assure me that it has had a happy effect in removing my fever, and will tend very much to the establishment of my general health; it is in a fair

[1] A copy of the same letter was sent to the Secretary of War and to the Board of the Treasury; and a similar one to Ebenezer Hazard, Postmaster-General.

way of healing, and time and patience only are wanting to remove this evil. I am able to take exercise in my coach, by having it so contrived as to extend myself the full length of it.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for the anxiety which you express, that I should have some person about me, who is well acquainted with my constitution, and who has been accustomed to my confidence. The habits of intimacy and friendship, in which I have long lived with Dr. Craik, and the opinion I have of his professional knowledge, would most certainly point him out as the man of my choice in all cases of sickness. I am convinced of his sincere attachment to me, and I should with cheerfulness trust my life in his hands, but, how far circumstances at present would justify his quitting his practice in Alexandria and its vicinity to gratify his inclinations and my wishes, I am not able to say; but, could it be made consistent with his advantage to be near me, I am sure it would be highly pleasing to me. I must, however, in justice to Dr. Bard, who has attended me during my late indisposition, declare, that neither skill nor attention has been wanting on his part, and, as I could not have the assistance of my good friend, Dr. Craik, I think myself fortunate in having fallen into such good hands.[1]

[1] An anecdote characteristic of Washington is related by Professor McVickar, in his narrative of Dr. Bard's life, respecting an incident that happened in the course of his illness. "It was a case of anthrax, so malignant as for several days to threaten mortification. During this period Dr. Bard never quitted him. On one occasion, being left alone with him, General Washington, looking steadfastly in his face, desired his candid opinion as to the probable termination of

You have my sincere wishes, that your intended journey to the Sweet Springs may be the means of restoring the health of your brother, and that it may be pleasant and healthful to yourself. I am, dear Sir, with very great esteem, your affectionate, &c.

TO JOHN JAY.

[PRIVATE.]

NEW YORK, 14 July, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I find myself incompetent to form any decided opinion upon the paper I received from you the other day, without having a view of the transactions, which have been had with the Spanish minister. I wish also to know whether, if the negotiations are renewed, it can be made to appear from any thing, which that gentleman has said, as the result of an advance towards it from him in his official character. Unless this is the case, and *primâ facie* the reverse, will it not convey to him and his court an idea, that a change of sentiment has taken place in the governing powers of this country? Will it be expedient and proper (at this moment) for the President to encourage such an idea; at any rate, without previously advising with the Senate? With very sincere esteem and regard,

I am, &c.

his disease, adding, with that placid firmness which marked his address, 'Do not flatter me with vain hopes; I am not afraid to die, and therefore can bear the worst.' Dr. Bard's answer, though it expressed hope, acknowledged his apprehensions. The President replied: 'Whether to-night, or twenty years hence, makes no difference; I know that I am in the hands of a good Providence.'"—*Life of Dr. Samuel Bard*, p. 136.

TO CHARLES THOMSON.

NEW YORK, 24 July, 1789.

SIR,

I have contemplated your note, wherein, after mentioning your having served in quality of secretary of Congress from the first meeting of that body, in 1774, to the present time, through an eventful period of almost fifteen years, you announce your wish to retire to private life; and I have to regret, that the period of my coming again into public life should be exactly that, in which you are about to *retire* from it.

The present age does so much justice to the unsullied reputation, with which you have always conducted yourself in the execution of the duties of your office, and posterity will find your name so honorably connected with the verification of such a multitude of astonishing facts, that my single suffrage would add little to the illustration of your merits. Yet I cannot withhold any just testimonial in favor of so old, so faithful, and so able a public officer, which might tend to soothe his mind in the shade of retirement. Accept, then, this serious declaration, that your services have been important, as your patriotism was distinguished; and enjoy that best of all rewards, the consciousness of having done your duty well.

You will be pleased, Sir, to deliver the books, records, and papers of the late Congress, the great seal of the federal Union, and the seal of the admiralty, to Mr. Roger Alden, the late deputy secretary of Congress, who is requested to take charge of them

until farther directions shall be given. I beg you to be persuaded, that it will always afford me real pleasure to extend whatever encouragement may be consistent with my general duties, to such particular persons as have long been faithful and useful servants to the community. I finally commend you to the protection of Heaven, and sincerely wish you may enjoy every species of felicity. I am, &c.

TO DAVID STUART.

NEW YORK, 26 July, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

In the first moment of my ability to sit in an easy chair, and that not entirely without pain, I occupy myself in acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, and thanking you for it.

Although my time (before I was confined) had been and probably now will be much more engaged, yet your communications without any reserve will be exceedingly grateful and pleasing to me. While the eyes of America, perhaps of the world, are turned to this government, and many are watching the movements of all those, who are concerned in its administration, I should like to be informed, through so good a medium, of the public opinion of both men and measures, and of none more than myself ; not so much of what may be thought commendable parts, if any, of my conduct, as of those which are conceived to be of a different complexion. The man, who means to

commit no wrong, will never be guilty of enormities; consequently he can never be unwilling to learn what is ascribed to him as foibles. If they are really such, the knowledge of them in a well-disposed mind will go half way towards a reform. If they are not errors, he can explain and justify the motives of his actions.

At a distance from the theatre of action, truth is not always related without embellishment, and sometimes is entirely perverted, from a misconception of the causes which produce the effects that are the subjects of censure. 1. This leads me to think, that a system, which I found it indispensably necessary to adopt upon my first coming to this city, might have undergone severe strictures, and have had motives very foreign from those that govern me, assigned as causes therefor. I mean, returning no *visits*[1]; 2ly, appointing certain days to receive them generally, (not to the exclusion however of visits on any other days under particular circumstances;) and, 3ly, at first entertaining no company, and afterwards until I was unable to entertain any at all confining it to official characters. A few days evinced the necessity of the two first in so clear a point of view, that, had I not adopted it, I should have been unable to have attended to any sort of business, unless I had applied the hours allotted to rest and refreshment to this purpose; for by the time I had done breakfast, and thence till dinner, and afterwards till bed-time, I could not get relieved from the ceremony of one visit, before I had to attend to another. In a word, I had no leisure to read or to

[1] He seems to have made visits of ceremony before his inauguration.

answer the despatches, that were pouring in upon me from all quarters.

And with respect to the third matter, I early received information through very respectable channels, that the adoption thereof was not less essential, than that of the other two, if the President was to preserve the dignity and respect, that was due to the first magistrate. For that a contrary conduct had involved the late presidents of Congress in insuperable difficulties, and the office, (in this respect,) in perfect contempt; for the table was considered as a public one, and every person, who could get introduced, conceived that he had a *right* to be invited to it. This, although the table was always crowded (and with mixed company, and the President considered in no better light than as a *maitre d'hôtel*), was in its nature impracticable, and as many offences given as if no table had been kept.

The citizens of this place were well knowing to this fact, and the principal members of Congress in both Houses were so well convinced of the impropriety and degrading situation of their President, that it was the general opinion, that the President of the United States should neither give or receive invitations; some from a belief, independent of the circumstances I have mentioned, that this was fundamentally right in order to acquire respect. But to this I had two objections, both powerful in my mind; first, the novelty of it I knew would be considered as an ostentatious show of mimicry of sovereignty; and, secondly, that so great a seclusion would have stopped

the avenues to useful information from the many, and make me more dependent on that of the few. But to hit on a discriminating medium was found more difficult than it appeared to be at first view; for, if the citizens at large were begun upon, no line could be drawn; all, of decent appearance, would expect to be invited, and I should have been plunged at once into the evil I was endeavoring to avoid. Upon the whole, it was thought best to confine *my* invitations to official characters and strangers of distinction. This line I have hitherto pursued. Whether it may be found best to adhere to, or depart from it, in some measure must be the result of experience and information.

So strongly had the citizens of this place imbibed an idea of the impropriety of my accepting invitations to dinner, that I have not received one from any family (though they are remarkable for hospitality, and though I have received every civility and attention possible from them) since I came to the city, except dining with the governor on the day of my arrival; so that, if this should be adduced as an article of impeachment, there can be at least *one* good reason adduced for my not dining out; to wit, never having been asked to do so.

One of the gentlemen, whose name is mentioned in your letter, though high-toned, has never, I believe, appeared with more than *two* horses in his carriage[1];

[1] A report had gone abroad, that the Vice-President never appeared publicly except *with a coach and six horses*, which Dr. Stuart said was creating much excitement in Virginia, and was put forward by the opponents of the constitution as a proof of the monarchical tendency of the government.

but it is to be lamented, that *he* and *some others* have stirred a question, which has given rise to so much animadversion, and which I confess has given me much uneasiness, lest it should be supposed by some, (unacquainted with facts,) that the object they had in view was not displeasing to me. The truth is, the question was moved before I arrived, without any privity or knowledge of it on my part, and urged, after I was apprized of it, contrary to my opinion; for I foresaw and predicted the reception it has met with, and the use that would be made of it by the adversaries of the government. Happily the matter is now done with, I hope never to be revived.[1]

[1] This paragraph relates to a scheme, which had lately been before Congress, respecting the titles by which the high officers of government should be addressed. "Nothing could equal the ferment and disquietude," said Dr. Stuart, "occasioned by the proposition respecting titles. As it is believed to have originated with Mr. Adams and Mr. Lee, they are unpopular to an extreme." The history of the proceedings on this subject is briefly as follows:

A committee was appointed by the Senate, April 23d, "to consider and report what style or titles it will be proper to annex to the offices of President and Vice-President of the United States." Richard Henry Lee was chairman. The next day a committee was appointed by the House of Representatives to confer with the committee of the Senate on the same subject. This joint committee reported, "That it is improper to annex any style or title to the respective styles or titles of office expressed in the constitution." The report was unanimously adopted by the House, but was not agreed to by the Senate. The question was then taken in that body, whether the President of the United States should be addressed by the title of *His Excellency*, which passed in the negative, and the subject was referred to another committee, of which Lee, Ellsworth, and Dr. Johnson were members.

A proposal to the House of Representatives to confer with this second committee brought on a debate, which was conducted with considerable warmth, and was stopped by the previous question, which set the subject aside, and it was never again brought forward in that House. The committee of the Senate reported, however, that it was proper to style the President, *His Highness the President of the United States of America, and Protector of the Liberties of the same.* In the meantime the House of Representatives had addressed

The opposition of the Senate to the discrimination in the tonnage bill was so adverse to my ideas of justice and policy, that I should have suffered it to pass silently into a law without my signature, had I not been assured by some members of the Senate, that they were preparing another bill, which would answer the purpose more effectually without being liable to

the President, in reply to his inaugural speech, as *President of the United States;* and the Senate, for the purpose of preserving harmony with the other House, resolved, May 14th, to follow its example in an address about to be made to the President, and postponed the report of their committee; agreeing at the same time in the resolve, that, "From a decent respect for the opinion and practice of civilized nations, whether under monarchical or republican forms of government, whose custom is to annex titles of respectability to the office of their chief magistrate, and that, in intercourse with foreign nations, a due respect for the majesty of the people of the United States may not be hazarded by an appearance of singularity, the Senate have been induced to be of opinion, that it would be proper to annex a respectable title to the office of the President of the United States." With this declaration of their opinion the Senate allowed the matter to rest, and it was never afterwards revived. Senator McClay was one of the most active opponents to titles, and has left the fullest record of the contest on this question.

While the subject was thus solemnly treated by Congress, it caused much excitement throughout the country. It was discussed in the gazettes, but the advocates of titles found few supporters. By these it was affirmed, however, that titles were as harmless as they were necessary, and that the President, as representing the *majesty of the people*, might even be styled *His Majesty* without reasonable offence to republican ears. Others said that *His Excellency* was not a proper title, because it was applied to officers below him, particularly in the diplomatic department. In some of the newspapers the President was called "*His Highness, the President-General.*" The Senate was denominated *Most Honorable*, and the same epithet was applied to the members of that body. For instance, it was published, that the *Most Honorable* Rufus King and the *Most Honorable* Philip Schuyler were appointed Senators. And when Mrs. Washington came to New York, she was accompanied by the "*Lady of the Most Honorable Robert Morris.*" The Representatives, and even the secretaries of the executive departments, were favored with no higher title than *Honorable*. In the debates on the subject, Mr. Clymer said that, "as soon as a man is selected for the public service, his fellow citizens with a liberal hand showered down titles upon him, either *excellency* or *honorable;* he would venture to affirm there were more *Honorable Esquires* in the United States than in

the objections and to the consequences, which they *feared* would have attended the discrimination, which was proposed in the tonnage law. Why they keep their doors shut, when acting in a legislative capacity, I am unable to inform you, unless it is because they think there is too much speaking to the gallery in the other House, and business thereby retarded.

all the world besides." There appears not to have been a single member of the House of Representatives in favor of titles. The habit of bestowing them gradually subsided. It would be ludicrous at the present day to affix the superlative epithet to a senator's name, and not less so to use the anticlimax *Honorable Esquire*, which prevailed during the Revolution. General Washington was scrupulous to give every man his official appellation, but was opposed to all titles as marks of rank in a republican government. A person sent to him a manuscript treatise on heraldry, the publication of which was suppressed by his advice, as he thought its tendency would be hostile to the sentiments of the people and unfavorable to liberty.

"Titles to both the President and Vice-President were formally and unanimously condemned by a vote of the House of Representatives. This, I hope, will shew to the friends of Republicanism that our new Government was not meant to substitute either monarchy or aristocracy, and that the genius of the people is as yet averse to both."—*Madison to Jefferson*, 9 May, 1789. "The address is purged, you will observe, of all titles whatsoever, except the Constitutional one. This point had been previously determined by a Report from a joint committee originated by the Senate, for the purpose of settling what, or whether any, titles should be annexed to the President and Vice-President. The Report was unanimously agreed to by the House of Representatives previous to the address. I am sorry to find that the Senate do not concur in this principle of dignified simplicity. They have disagreed to the Report of the joint Committee, and have proposed another consultation on the subject. The House of Representatives will assuredly adhere to the first determination. The friends of titles in the other Branch are headed by the Vice-President, who is seconded with all the force and urgency of natural temper by R. H. L[ee]."—*Madison to Pendleton*, 10 May, 1789. The Senate used no title in its answer, an "imitation that was extorted. . . . The projected title was, his Highness the President of the United States and protector of their liberties. Had the project succeeded, it would have subjected the President to a severe dilemma, and given a deep wound to our infant Government."—*Madison to Jefferson*, 23 May, 1789. "*Honorary titles* lead to *permanent distinctions* and *hereditary establishments*, these to *monstrous taxes*, and both to the ruin of liberty."—*Boston Gazette.*

Your letter is the first intimation I ever received of any defect in the title or of any claim to the land called Claiborn's. It is hardly to be conceived that Philip Whitehead Claiborn, who was Brother (and as you say Executor) to William Claiborn, for the payment of whose debts it was sold, should have joined in the conveyance of land, to which he himself had a right by entail. Admit this, and bad motives must be ascribed to the action ; viz., a knowledge that his son, if the entail was good, would not be barred by his conveyance, if no act of Assembly or writ of ad quod animum had previously docked it. Such a suspicion I cannot harbor of that Gentleman, because he possessed an exceeding fair character. To the best of my recollection there are some papers in the garret at Mount Vernon, which belong to the estate of Mr. Custis. In making a hasty arrangement of my own I came across and had them put into a trunk or box by themselves. From a cursory inspection they appeared altogether unimportant, or I should have sent them to you ; and in another trunk in my study there are papers which relate to my accounts and transactions with that estate. Possibly (for it is not very probable,) you may find something in one or the other of those that may be useful. If in the first, I wish, if they are deserving of the carriage, that you would take them home. The others may be necessary for my own security, and therefore I would not have them removed. The decree of King William's Court will not, I fear avail much, for I do not conceive that it could extend (if there was an entail in force) be-

yond the life of William Claiborn if then living, or that Phil. Claiborn's act could bind his son. Your trouble in this and the other disputes with Mr. Custis's estate I perceive will be very great. That your success may be correspondent I sincerely wish. We shall be anxious after the decisions to learn the result.

I am mistaken greatly, if I did not in the year 1778 convey both the King William and the King and Queen lands to Mr. Custis by deeds executed at Camp before Colonels Harrison, Mead, and many others as witnesses to prove it in the General Court, and this in the presence of Mr. Custis. If it was not received for want of due proof, I am ready to reacknowledge the same deed, or a copy of it, for I recollect (pretty well) taking the opinion of Col. Harrison upon the nature of the conveyance—and if my memory has not failed me you will find some mention of the matter in one of my letters to Mr. Custis which you called upon me some time ago to authenticate.

Mr. Dandridge gave me an order upon Mr. Brown (of Kentucky) for £800 to be applied if received to the credit of Mr. Custis's Estate but the order was protested, and Mr. Dandridge had been advertised thereof.

Nothing would give me more pleasure, than to serve any of the descendants of General Nelson, of whose merits, when living, no man could entertain a higher opinion than I did. At the same time I must confess, there are few persons of whom I have no personal knowledge, or good information, that I would take into my family, where many qualifica-

tions are necessary to fit them for the duty of it; to wit, a good address, abilities above mediocrity, secrecy and prudence, attention and industry, good temper, and a capacity and disposition to write correctly and well and to do it obligingly.

Most clerkships will, I presume, either by law or custom, be left to the appointment of their principals in office. Little expectation therefore could Mr. Nelson, or any stranger, have from this source. This latter consideration, added to the desire I feel of serving the son of my old friend and acquaintance, has induced me at all hazards to offer Mr. Thomas Nelson, his son, a place in my family.

I shall not trouble you with legislative or any other accounts, which are detailed in the papers, but that I have sent you the journals of the Senate, as far as they have been published and handed to me. If the successor of Mr. Richards would get the *Federal Gazette*, published by Fenno, from this city, it would enable him to collect as much information of what is passing on the theatre of New York, as he could extract from all the other papers of the place (and they are very numerous), were he to go to the expense of them. My best wishes attend Mrs. Stuart and all the family; and I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and servant.[1]

[1] The first appointment submitted to the Senate by the President was that of William Short to be in charge of the American legation in Paris, during the absence of Thomas Jefferson, the minister under the confederation. This nomination was made on June 16th, and confirmed on the 18th. On August 3d, a long list of appointments in the revenue service was submitted, and the Senate acted upon them, rejecting but one—the nomination of Benjamin Fishbourn as naval officer for the port of Savannah. In sending in the name

TO JAMES MADISON.

NEW YORK, 9 August, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

In consequence of the enclosed resolution, I had a conference with the committee therein named yesterday, when I expressed the sentiments, which you also have enclosed.

I was assured by the committee, that the only object the senate had in view was to be informed of the mode of communication which would be most agreeable to the President, and that a perfect acquiescence would be yielded thereto. But I could plainly perceive, notwithstanding, that oral communication was the point they aimed at. Indeed, one of the gentlemen candidly declared, that a great object with him, in wishing this, was to effect a *viva voce* vote in that body. He added, however, that he was not without hopes of accomplishing this without. To this I replied, finding all three were opposed to the balloting system, that nothing would sooner induce me to relinquish my mode of nomination by written messages, than to accomplish this end. Thus the matter stands for my further consideration.

What do you think I had best do? I am willing to pursue that line of conduct, which shall appear to

of Lachlan McIntosh as his substitute, Washington showed that the rejection had not a little touched him. "Permit me to submit to your consideration, whether on occasions, where the propriety of a nomination appears questionable to you, it would not be expedient to communicate that circumstance to me, and thereby avail yourselves of the information which led me to make them and which I would with pleasure lay before you." And he proceeded to give his reasons for naming Fishbourn.—*Message*, 6 August, 1789.

be most conducive to the public good, without regard to the indulgence of my inclination, which, I confess, and for other reasons in addition to those which are enumerated, although they are secondary, would not be gratified by personal nominations.[1]

The period is now arrived, when the seat of the vacant judge in the western district is to be filled. Would Colonel Carrington, do you think, be pleased with this appointment? Or are you acquainted with any professional character of fitness for the office, south of New Jersey, that would accept it?[2]

I have had some conversation with Mr. Jay

[1] A motion had been made in the Senate on the 3d of August proposing that in place of determining upon a nomination by ballot, as settled by a rule adopted June 18th, some other mode should be adopted, like a *viva voce* vote; but the motion was lost. On the 5th of August another motion was made, "That it is the opinion of the Senate, that their advice and consent to the appointment of officers should be given in the presence of the President." This motion was postponed to the next day, when it was ordered, "That Mr. Izard, Mr. King, and Mr. Carroll be a committee to wait on the President of the United States, and confer with him on the mode of communication proper to be pursued between him and the Senate in the formation of treaties, and making appointments to offices." The committee accordingly waited on the President, and had the conference mentioned in the above letter.

In regard to treaties, a practice was at first begun, which was not pursued. On the 21st of August, the following message was sent to the Senate. "The President of the United States will meet the Senate in the Senate chamber, at half-past eleven o'clock to-morrow, to advise with them on the terms of the treaty to be negotiated with the southern Indians." He accordingly took his seat in the Senate, attended by General Knox, the Secretary of War, for two days in succession, when the outlines of a treaty proposed by the Secretary were discussed. But this practice, being found inconvenient, and subject to various objections, particularly in regard to treaties with foreign powers, was soon discontinued.—*Story's Commentaries*, vol. iii., p. 371.

[2] On the 18th the following nominations for the several offices in the Western Territory were sent to the Senate: for Governor, Arthur St. Clair; for Secretary, Winthrop Sergeant; Judges, Samuel Holden Parsons, John Cleve Symmes, and William Barton.

respecting his views to office, which I will communicate to you at our first interview; and this, if perfectly convenient and agreeable to you, may be this afternoon, as I shall be at home, and expect no company.

I am yours affectionately.

SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE COMMITTEE FROM THE SENATE, APPOINTED TO CONFER WITH HIM ON THE MODE OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE SENATE RESPECTING TREATIES AND NOMINATIONS.

August 8th, 1789.

In all matters respecting *Treaties*, oral communications seem indispensably necessary; because in these a variety of matters are contained, all of which not only require consideration, but some of them may undergo much discussion; to do which by written communications would be tedious without being satisfactory.

Oral communications may be proper, also, for discussing the propriety of sending representatives to foreign courts, and ascertaining the grade, or character, in which they are to appear, and may be so in other cases.

But it may be asked *where* are these oral communications to be made? If in the Senate-chamber, how are the President and Vice-President to be arranged? the latter by the constitution being *ex-officio* President of the Senate. Would the Vice-President be disposed to give up the chair? If not, ought the President of the United States to be placed in an awkward situation when there? These are matters, which require previous consideration and adjustment for meetings in the Senate-chamber or elsewhere.

With respect to *nominations*, my present ideas are, that, as they point to a single object, unconnected in its nature with any other object, they had best be made by written messages. In this case the acts of the President and the acts of the Senate will stand upon clear, distinct, and responsible ground.

Independently of this consideration, it could be no pleasing thing, I conceive, for the President, on the one hand, to be present and hear the propriety of his nominations questioned, nor for the Senate, on the other hand, to be under the smallest restraint from his presence from the fullest and freest inquiry into the character of the person nominated. The President, in a situation like this, would be reduced to one of two things ; either to be a silent witness of the decision by ballot, if there are objections to the nomination, or in justification thereof (if he should think it right) to support it by argument ; neither of which might be agreeable, and the latter improper ; for, as the President has a right to nominate without assigning his reasons, so has the Senate a right to dissent without giving theirs.

SENTIMENTS DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT AT A SECOND CONFERENCE WITH THE COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE, AUGUST 10, 1789.

The President has the power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties and to appoint officers.

The Senate, when this power is exercised, is evidently a council only to the President, however its concurrence may be to his acts. It seems incident to this relation between them, that not only the *time*, but the *place* and *manner* of consultation, should be with the President. It is probable, that the place may vary. The indisposition or inclination of the President may require, that the Senate should be summoned to the President's house. Whenever the government shall have buildings of its own, an executive chamber will no doubt be provided, where the Senate will generally attend the President. It is not impossible, that the place may be made to depend in some degree on the nature of the business. In the appointment to offices, the agency of the Senate is purely executive, and they may be summoned to the President. In treaties, the agency is perhaps as much of a legislative nature, and the business may possibly be referred to their deliberations in their legislative chamber. The occasion for this distinction will be lessened if not destroyed, when a chamber shall be appropriated for the joint business of the President and the Senate.

The *manner* of consultation may also vary. The indisposition of the President may supersede the mere question of conveniency. The inclination or ideas of different Presidents may be different. The opinions, both of President and Senators, as to the proper manner, may be changed by experience. In some kinds of business it may be found best for the President to make his propositions orally and in person, in others by a written message. On some occasions it may be most convenient, that the President should attend the deliberations and decisions on his propositions; on others that he should not; or that he should not attend the whole of the time. In other cases, again, as in treaties of a complicated nature, it may happen, that he will send his propositions in writing, and consult the Senate in person after time shall have been allowed for consideration. Many other varieties may be suggested as to the *mode* by practice.

If these remarks be just, it would seem not amiss, that the Senate should accommodate their rules to the uncertainty of the particular mode and place, that may be preferred, providing for the reception of either oral or written propositions, and for giving their consent and advice in either the *presence* or *absence* of the President, leaving him free to use the mode and place, that may be found most eligible and accordant with other business, which may be before him at the time.[1]

[1] "IN SENATE, August 21st, 1789.

"The committee appointed to wait on the President of the United States, and confer with him on the mode of communication proper to be pursued between him and the Senate in the formation of treaties, and making appointments to offices, reported; which report was agreed to as follows.

"*Resolved*, That when nominations shall be made in writing by the President of the United States to the Senate, a future day shall be assigned, unless the Senate shall direct otherwise, for taking them into consideration; that when the President of the United States shall meet the Senate in the Senate-chamber, the President of the Senate shall have a chair on the floor, be considered as at the head of the Senate, and his chair shall be assigned to the President of the United States; that, when the Senate shall be convened by the President of the United States at any other place, the President of the Senate and Senators shall attend at the place appointed. The secretary of the Senate shall also attend to take the minutes of the Senate; that all questions shall be put by the President of the Senate, either in the presence or absence of the President of the United States, and the Senators shall signify their assent or dissent by answering *viva voce* AY or NO."

TO JAMES MADISON.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

[August, 1789.]

The points which at present occur to me, and on which I wish your aid, are brought to view in the inclosed statement—I give you the trouble of receiving this evening that you may (if other matter do not interfere) suffer them to run through your mind between this and to-morrow afternoon when I shall expect to see you at the appointed time.

Besides the enclosed

Would it do *now* that Mr. Barton has declined the Judge's Seat (Western Territory) to nominate Col, Carrington for that office?—If not, can you think of any other that would suit him, of new creation; by this I mean, which has not an actual occupant, or some who, from similarity of Office, may have better pretensions to it.

Can you bring to mind any fit character for the vacancy just mentioned (West of New Jersey). As Virga. has given and may furnish characters for important offices, probably it would be better to exclude her also on this occasion.

What sort of a character in point of respectability and fitness for this office has Maj. [George] Turner late of S. Carolina, now of Philadelphia?[1]

Have you any knowledge of the character of Mr. Lawrence—a practicing attorney, and son-in-law to General St. Clair?

[1] September 11th George Turner was nominated, in place of Barton, declined.

What can I do with A[rthur] L[ee]? He has applied to be nominated one of the Associate Judges, but I cannot bring my mind to adopt the request. The opinion entertained of him by those with whom I am most conversant, is unpropitious, and yet few men have received more marks of public favor and confidence than he has. These contradictions are embarrassing.

Should the sense of the Senate be taken on the propriety of sending public characters abroad—say, to England, Holland, and Portugal? And of a day for thanksgiving?

Would it be well to advise with them before the adjournment, on the expediency and justice of demanding a surrender of our Posts?

Being clearly of opinion that there ought to be a difference in the Wages of the Members of the two branches of the Legislature, would it be politic or prudent in the President, when the Bill comes to him, to send it back with his reasons for non concurring?

TO BENJAMIN LINCOLN.

NEW YORK, 11 August, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

On the 15th of September next there is to be a treaty held in the State of Georgia, between the Indians on the Southern frontiers and Commissioners on the part of Georgia. At this treaty there will be a numerous and respectable concourse of Indians: two, and some say three thousand. Their famous Counsel-

lor, the noted McGillivray, is to be present at it; and it is now in agitation, and a bill is before the House of Representatives for that purpose, to appoint Commissioners on the part of the United States to attend at this treaty, to establish a permanent and lasting peace between the United States and the Indians on the Southern & Western frontiers.—It is necessary, in a matter of such importance to this country, that these Commissioners should be persons who have been known in public life, and who are very respectable characters,—and if to these two circumstances could be added, their being held in high estimation in the Southern States, without being inhabitants of any of them, it would be a very desirable thing.—Under these circumstances, it is my wish that you should be one of these Commissioners;—and I have therefore given you this early intimation of the matter that you might (if it should be determined to appoint Commissioners, and is agreeable to you, and can be made to comport with your present office) be making such arrangements as will enable you to be at New York and ready to embark for Georgia, on or before the first day of September; and with an expectation of being absent 3 or 4 months.

You will make up your mind on this matter, and give me an answer by the first post after you receive this, as you see no time is to be lost, for it is absolutely necessary that the Commissioners should be on the spot the 15th of September to prevent the enormous expense which would be incurred by detaining such a numerous body of Indians for any time.—In

the meantime you will keep this intimation to yourself, for in the first place it is not *certain* that Commissioners will be appointed—And if they should other circumstances might render a concealment of this intimation proper.[1] I am, my dear Sir, &c.

[1] Alexander McGillivray, who controlled the Creek Indians, was the son of a tory inhabitant of Georgia, and a principal woman of the Creek nation. He had received an English education, and his ability and ambition were great and sharpened by a resentment against Georgia, which had confiscated his estates in the late war. On the signing of peace at Paris, he had proposed a treaty of alliance and commerce to the Spanish Governor of Pensacola (Arthur O'Neal or O'Neil), thus virtually seeking the protection of Spain, and even hinting at a separation of the Western territory, now rapidly being colonized from the Atlantic States, from the Confederation.—Gayarre, *Louisiana under the Spanish Domination*, 158, 159. A treaty was made, and the profits of the resulting commerce, carried on as a monopoly under Spanish protection, centred in Great Britain, one of the Bahamas being the place of deposit. The validity of certain treaties of cession made between Georgia and the Creeks resulted in hostilities, and the Continental Congress (15 July, 1788) notified the Indians that "should they persist in refusing to enter into a treaty upon reasonable terms, the arms of the United States shall be called forth for the protection of that frontier." A condition of war and the unfulfilled threat of Congress were forced upon the attention of Washington.

In August, 1789, the President took counsel of Congress in the matter, and Benjamin Lincoln, Cyrus Griffin, and David Humphreys were named Commissioners to treat with the southern Indians, the "first great object of their mission" being to effect peace between Georgia and the Creeks. "On your success materially depends the internal peace of Georgia, and probably its attachment to the General Government of the United States." Every effort was to be made to detach McGillivray from his Spanish alliance and make him a warm friend of the United States. (The full instructions may be found in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, i., 65.) The mission ended in a total failure so far as the Creeks were concerned, and the commissioners laid the entire blame on McGillivray, a pensioner of Spain, who seemed to be influenced by his private interests. For in August, 1790, when he, with some of the kings and head men of the Creeks came to New York and entered into negotiations for a treaty, the trade problems were the most difficult to solve. This trade of the Creeks, amounting to £12,000 a year, was entirely in the hands of British merchants who enjoyed special privileges in Spanish ports. "As the trade of the Indians is a main mean of their political management, it is therefore obvious, that the United States cannot possess any security for the performance

TO JAMES CRAIK.

NEW YORK, 8 September, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

The letter, with which you favored me on the 24th ultimo came duly to hand, and for the friendly sentiments contained in it you have my sincere and hearty thanks.

My disorder was of long and painful continuance, and, though now freed from the latter, the wound given by the incision is not yet closed. Persuaded as I am, that the case has been treated with skill, and with as much tenderness as the nature of the complaint would admit, yet I confess I often wished for your inspection of it. During the paroxysm, the distance rendered this impracticable, and after the paroxysm had passed, I had no conception of being confined to a lying posture on one side six weeks, and that I should feel the remains of it more than twelve. The part affected is now reduced to the size of a barley-corn, and by Saturday next, which will complete the thirteenth week, I expect it will be skinned over. Upon the whole, I have more reason to be thankful, that it is no worse, than to repine at the confinement.

The want of regular exercise, with the cares of office, will, I have no doubt, hasten my departure for

treaties with the Creeks, while their trade is liable to be interrupted or withheld, at the caprice of two foreign powers. Hence it becomes an object of real importance to form new channels for the commerce of the Creeks through the United States."—*Washington's Message to the Senate*, 4 August, 1790. Three days later a treaty was sent to the Senate which was intended to close all controversies with that nation, and would have done so, had it not been for the efforts of the Spanish authorities to defeat its execution.

that country from whence no traveller returns; but a faithful discharge of whatsoever trust I accept, as it ever has, so it always will be, the primary consideration in every transaction of my life, be the consequences what they may. Mrs. Washington has, I think, better health than usual, and the children are well and in the way of improvement.

I always expected, that the gentleman, whose name you have mentioned, would mark his opposition to the new government with consistency. Pride on the one hand, and want of manly candor on the other will not, I am certain, let him acknowledge an error in his opinions respecting it, though conviction should flash on his mind as strongly as a ray of light. If certain characters, which you have also mentioned, should tread blindfold in his steps, it would be matter of no wonder to me. They are in the habit of thinking that everything he says and does is right, and (if capable) they will not judge for themselves.

It gives me pleasure to hear, and I wish you to express it to them, that my nephews George and Lawrence Washington are attentive to their studies, and obedient to your orders and admonition. That kind of learning, which is to fit them for the most useful and necessary purposes of life, among which writing well, arithmetic, and the less abstruse branches of the mathematics are certainly to be comprehended, ought to be particularly attended to, and it is my earnest wish that it should be so.

The gazettes are so full of the occurrences of public, and indeed a private nature, which happen in this

place that it is unnecessary, (if I had more leisure than falls to my lot,) to attempt a repetition. I shall therefore refer you to them, or to the Alexandria paper, through which they may, if pains are taken, be retailed. Mrs. Washington and the rest of the family join me in every good and friendly wish for Mrs. Craik, yourself and the rest of your family; and with sentiments of sincere regard and friendship, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO MRS. BETTY LEWIS.

NEW YORK, 13 September, 1789.

MY DEAR SISTER,

Colonel Ball's[1] letter gave me the first account of my mother's death.[2] Since that I have received Mrs. Carter's letter, written at your request, and previous to both I was prepared for the event by some advices of her illness communicated to your son Robert.

Awful and affecting as the death of a parent is, there is consolation in knowing, that heaven has spared ours to an age beyond which few attain, and favored her with the full enjoyment of her mental faculties, and as much bodily strength as usually falls to the lot of four score. Under these considerations, and a hope that she is translated to a happier place, it is the duty of her relatives to yield due submission to the decrees of the Creator. When I was last at Fredericksburg, I took a final leave of my mother, never expecting to see her more.

[1] Burges Ball.

[2] Mary Washington died at Fredericksburg, August 25th, 1789, in the eighty-third year of her age. She had been a widow forty-six years. General Washington's father died on the 12th of April, 1743.

It will be impossible for me at this distance, and circumstanced as I am, to give the smallest attention to the execution of her will; nor indeed is much required, if, as she directs, no security should be given, or appraisement made of her estate; but that the same should be allotted to the devisees with as little trouble and delay as may be. How far this is legal, I know not. Mr. Mercer can, and I have no doubt would, readily advise you if asked, which I wish you to do. If the ceremony of inventorying, appraising, &c. can be dispensed with, all the rest, (as the will declares that few or no debts are owing,) can be done with very little trouble. Every person may in that case immediately receive what is specifically devised. The negroes who are engaged in the crops and under an overseer, must remain I conceive on the plantation until the crop is finished (which ought to be as soon as possible), after which the horses, stock of all sorts, and every species of property not disposed of by the will, (the debts if any being first paid) must by law be equally divided into five parts, one of which you,[1] another my brother Charles and a third myself are entitled to, the other two thirds fall to the share of the children of our deceased brothers Samuel and John.

Were it not, that the specific legacies, which are given to me by the will, are meant and ought to be considered and received as mementos of parental affection, in the last solemn act of life, I should not be desirous of receiving or removing them; but in

[1] As Mrs. Washington was possessed of the negroes only during her life, her husband having disposed of them by will after her death, Mrs. Lewis was not entitled to any part of them.

this point of view I set a value on them much beyond their intrinsic worth.

Whilst it occurs to me, it is necessary it should be known that there is a fellow belonging to that estate now at my house, who never stayed elsewhere, for which reason, and because he has a family I should be glad to keep him. He must I should conceive be far short in value of the fifth of the other negroes which will be to be divided, but I shall be content to take him as my proportion of them—and, if from a misconception either of the number or the value of these negroes it should be found that he is of greater value than falls to my lot I shall readily allow the difference, in order that the fellow may be gratified, as he never would consent to go from me.

Debts, if any are due, should be paid from the sale of the crops, Plantation utensils, Horses and Stock, and the sooner an account is taken of the latter and they can conveniently be disposed of, the better it will be for two reasons; first because the Overseer (if he is not a very honest man) may take advantage of circumstances, and convert part of these things to his own use—and secondly because the Season is now fast approaching when without feeding (which would lessen the sale of the corn and fodder) the stock will fall off, and consequently sell to a disadvantage. Whether my mother has kept any accounts that can be understood is more than I am able to say—If any thing is owing to her it should be received—and, if due from her, paid after due proof thereof is made—She has had a great deal of money from me at times,

as can be made appear by my books, and the accounts of Mr. L. Washington during my absence,—and over and above this has not only had all that was ever made from the Plantation, but got her provisions and every thing else she thought proper from thence. In short to the best of my recollection I have never in my life received a copper from the estate—and have paid many hundred pounds (first and last) to her in cash—However I want no retribution—I conceived it to be a duty whenever she asked for money, and I had it, to furnish her, notwithstanding she got all the crops or the amount of them and took every thing she wanted from the plantation for the support of her family, horses, &c. besides.

As the accounts for or against the estate must not only from the declaration in the will, but from the nature of the case be very trifling and confined I should suppose to the town of Fredericksburg, it might be proper therefore in that paper to require in an advertisement all those who have any demands to bring them in properly attested immediately, and those who are owing to pay forthwith. The same advertisement might appoint a day for selling the stock, and every thing, excepting Negroes, at the plantation, that is not devised by the will, as it will be more convenient I should suppose for the heirs to receive their respective dividends of the money arising from the sales than to be troubled with receiving a cow, a calf, or such like things after the debts (which must be the case) have been first paid. It might be well in fixing the day of sale, to consult

the Overseer, to know when the business of the plantation will admit the Cart, Team and Utensils to be taken from it.

As the number of articles to be sold cannot be many and will be of small value, I think they had better be sold for ready money and so advertised, for though they would fetch more on credit, there would more than probable be bad debts contracted, and at any rate delay, if not law suits, before the money could be collected, and besides if there are debts to be paid money will be wanted for the purpose, and in no way can be so readily and properly obtained as by a ready money sale, and from the crops.

If you think this business will be too troublesome for you with the aid of your sons—Mr. Carter and Colonel Ball—who I am persuaded will give each of us assistance, and you will let me know it, I will desire Major George Washington to attend.

As the land at the Little-falls Plantation goes to Mr. Bushrod Washington he should be apprised in time of the breaking of it up, otherwise there may be injury to the houses and fencing if left without some person to attend to them. Have particular care taken of her papers, the letters to her, &c.

I should prefer selling the houses and lotts on which my Mother lived to renting of them,—and would give a year or two years' credit to the purchasers paying interest—and not being acquainted with the value of lotts in Fredericksburg, I would leave the price to any three indifferent and impartial Gentleman to say what they are worth, and that sum I will take.

If they cannot be sold and soon I would rent them from year to year to any orderly Tenant on a moderate rent. If they are not disposed of on sale or by tennanting before the weather gets cool the paling will, I expect, be soon burnt up.

Give my love to Mrs. Carter, and thank her for the letter she wrote to me. I would have done this myself, had I more time for private correspondences. Mrs. Washington joins in best wishes for her, yourself, and all other friends; and I am, with the most sincere regard, your affectionate brother.[1]

TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

NEW YORK, 23 September, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

The affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health, and the warm expressions of personal friendship, which were contained in your letter of the 16th instant, claim my gratitude. And the consideration, that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady, greatly increases my obligation for it.[2]

[1] The will of Mary Washington and some letters of Washington on the estate, are printed in my *Wills of George Washington and his Immediate Ancestors*, 1891.

[2] Dr. Franklin's letter:

"PHILADELPHIA, 16 September, 1789.

"DEAR SIR,

"My malady renders my sitting up to write rather painful to me; but I cannot let my son-in-law, Mr. Bache, part for New York, without congratulating you by him on the recovery of your health, so precious to us all; and on the growing strength of our new government under your administration. For my own personal ease, I should have died two years ago; but, though those years have been spent in excruciating pain, I am pleased that I have lived them, since they have brought me to see our present situation. I am now finishing my eighty-fourth year, and probably with it my career in this life;

Would to God, my dear Sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain, under which you labor, and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself, as its continuance has been beneficial to our country and useful to mankind; or, if the united wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to science and humanity, could relieve the body from pains or infirmities, you could claim an exemption on this score. But this cannot be, and you have within yourself the only resource to which we can confidently apply for relief, a philosophic mind.

If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know, that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be thought on with respect, veneration, and affection by your sincere friend.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

NEW YORK, 27 September, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

Impressed with a conviction, that the due administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good government, I have considered the first arrangement of the

but in whatever state of existence I am placed hereafter, if I retain any memory of what has passed here, I shall with it retain the esteem, respect, and affection, with which I have long been, my dear friend, &c."

judicial department as essential to the happiness of our country, and to the stability of its political system. Hence the selection of the fittest characters to expound the laws, and dispense justice, has been an invariable object of my anxious concern.[1]

I mean not to flatter when I say, that considerations like these have ruled in the nomination of the attorney-general of the United States, and that my private wishes would be highly gratified by your acceptance of the office. I regarded the office as requiring those talents to conduct its important duties, and that disposition to sacrifice to the public good, which I believe you to possess and entertain. In both instances I doubt not the event will justify the conclusion. The appointment I hope will be accepted, and its functions, I am assured, will be well performed.

Notwithstanding the prevailing disposition to frugality, the salary of this office appears to have been fixed at what it is, from a belief that the station would confer preëminence on its possessor, and procure for him a decided preference of professional employment. As soon as the acts, which are necessary accompani-

[1] As early as July 10th Washington had talked with Cyrus Griffin, of the Virginia delegation, on the judiciary and customs appointments in Virginia, and appeared anxious to know if Edmund Pendleton, George Wythe, Lyons, or John Blair would prefer a federal to a State appointment. Edmund Randolph was also suggested, but no mention was made of particular offices for the person to be named. Late in July or early in August, the President wrote to Madison that he had determined to nominate Mr. Blair and Colonel Pendleton as associate and district judges, and Randolph as Attorney-General: "Mr. Randolph in this character I would prefer to any person I am acquainted with of not superior abilities, from habits of intimacy with him." Pendleton declined to serve, and Cyrus Griffin was named in his place.

ments of the appointment, can be got ready, you will receive official notice of the latter. This letter is only to be considered as an early communication of my sentiment on this occasion, and as a testimony of the sincere regard and esteem, with which I am, &c.[1]

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, 13 October, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

In my first moments of leisure I acknowledge the receipt of your several favors of the 23d of February, 3 of March and 29 of April.

To thank you for the interesting communications contained in those letters, and for the pains you have taken to procure me a watch, is all, or nearly all, I shall attempt in this letter; for I could only repeat

[1] Randolph's private affairs and his incompleted revision of the laws of the State, were urged as reasons for delaying an acceptance of the office.

In announcing their appointments to the associate judges of the Supreme Court, Washington wrote, 30 September, 1789: "Considering the judicial system as the chief pillar upon which our national government must rest, I have thought it my duty to nominate for the high offices in that department, such men as I conceived would give dignity and lustre to our national character; and I flatter myself that the love, which you bear to our country, and a desire to promote general happiness, will lead you to a ready acceptance of the enclosed commission, which is accompanied with such laws as have passed relative to your office." Five days later he inclosed a commission to John Jay, appointing him Chief Justice, and added: "In nominating you for the important station, which you now fill, I not only acted in conformity to my best judgment, but I trust I did a grateful thing to the good citizens of these United States; and I have a full confidence, that the love which you bear to our country, and a desire to promote general happiness, will not suffer you to hesitate a moment to bring into action the talents, knowledge, and integrity, which are so necessary to be exercised at the head of that department, which must be considered as the key-stone of our political fabric."

things, were I to set about it, which I have reason to believe have been regularly communicated to you in detail, at the periods which gave birth to them. It may not, however, be unpleasing to you to hear in one word, that the national government is organized, and, as far as *my* information goes, to the satisfaction of all parties; that opposition to it is either no more, or hides its head; that it is hoped and expected it will take strong root; and that the non-acceding States will very soon become members of the Union. No doubt is entertained of North Carolina; nor would there be of Rhode Island, had not the majority of that people bid adieu, long since, to every principle of honor, common sense, and honesty. A material change however has taken place, it is said, at the late election of representatives, and confident assurances are given, from that circumstance, of better dispositions in their legislature at its next session, now about to be held.

The revolution, which has been effected in France is of so wonderful a nature, that the mind can hardly realize the fact. If it ends as our last accounts, to the first of August, predict, that nation will be the most powerful and happy in Europe; but I fear, though it has gone triumphantly through the first paroxysm, it is not the last it has to encounter before matters are finally settled. In a word, the revolution is of too great magnitude to be effected in so short a space, and with the loss of so little blood. The mortification of the king, the intrigues of the queen, and the discontent of the princes and the noblesse,

will foment divisions, if possible, in the National Assembly; and they will unquestionably avail themselves of every *faux pas* in the formation of the constitution, if they do not give a more open, active opposition. To these, the licentiousness of the people on one hand, and sanguinary punishments on the other, will alarm the best disposed friends to the measure, and contribute not a little to the overthrow of their object. Great temperance, firmness, and foresight are necessary in the movements of that body. To forbear running from one extreme to another is no easy matter; and, should this be the case, rocks and shelves, not visible at present, may wreck the vessel.

This letter is an evidence, though of a trifling sort, that in the commencement of any work one rarely sees the progress or end of it. I declared to you in the beginning that I had little to say. I have got beyond the second page and find I have a good deal to add; but that no time or paper may be wasted in a useless preface I will come to the point.

Will you then, my good Sir, permit me to ask the favor of you to provide and send to me by the first Ship, bound to this place, or Philadelphia, mirrors for a table, with neat and fashionable but not expensive ornaments for them—such as will do credit to your taste—The mirrors will of course be in pieces that they may be adapted to the company, (the size of it I mean) the aggregate length of them may be ten feet —the breadth two feet—The frames may be plated ware, or any thing else more fashionable but not

more expensive. If I am defective recur to what you have seen on Mr. Robert Morris's table for my ideas *generally*. Whether these things can be had on better terms and in a better style in Paris than in London I will not undertake to decide. I recollect however to have had plated ware from both places, and those from the latter came cheapest,—but a single instance is no evidence of a general fact.

Of plated ware may be made I conceive handsome and useful Coolers for wine *at* and *after* dinner. Those I am in need of viz : *eight* double ones (for madeira and claret the wines usually drank at dinner) each of the apertures to be sufficient to contain a pint decanter, with an allowance in the depth of it for ice at bottom so as to raise the neck of the decanter above the cooler—between the apertures a handle is to be placed by which these double coolers may with convenience be removed from one part of the table to another. For the wine *after* dinner *four* quadruple coolers will be necessary, each aperture of which to be of the size of a *quart* decanter or quart bottle for four sorts of wine—These decanters or bottles to have ice at bottom, and to be elevated thereby as above—a central handle here also will be wanting—Should my description be defective, your imagination is fertile and on this I shall rely. One idea however I must impress you with and that is in whole or part to avoid extravagance. For extravagance would not comport with my own inclination, nor with the example which ought to be set. The reason why I prefer an aperture for every decanter or

bottle to coolers that would contain two and four is that whether full or empty the bottles will always stand upright and never be at variance with each other.

The letter enclosed with your draught accompanying it will provide the means for payment—The clumsy manner in which Merchants (or rather their tradesmen) execute commissions, where taste is required, for persons at a distance must be my apology, and the best that can be offered by—

Dear Sir, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

NEW YORK, 13 October, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

In the selection of characters to fill the important offices of government in the United States, I was naturally led to contemplate the talents and disposition, which I knew you to possess and entertain for the service of your country; and, without being able to consult your inclination, or to derive any knowledge of your intentions from your letters, either to myself or to any other of your friends, I was determined, as well by motives of private regard as a conviction of public propriety, to nominate you for the Department of State, which, under its present organization, involves many of the most interesting objects of the executive authority. But, grateful as your acceptance of this commission would be to me, I am at the same time desirous to accommodate your wishes, and I have therefore forborne to nominate

your successor at the court of Versailles, until I should be informed of your determination.

Being on the eve of a journey through the eastern States, with a view to observe the situation of the country, and in a hope of perfectly reëstablishing my health, which a series of indispositions has much impaired, I have deemed it proper to make this communication of your appointment, in order that you might lose no time, should it be your wish to visit Virginia during the recess of Congress, which will probably be the most convenient season, both as it may respect your private concerns and the public service.

Unwilling as I am to interfere in the direction of your choice of assistants, I shall only take the liberty of observing to you, that, from warm recommendations which I have received in behalf of Roger Alden, Esquire, assistant secretary to the late Congress, I have placed all the papers thereunto belonging under his care. Those papers, which more properly appertain to the office of foreign affairs, are under the superintendence of Mr. Jay, who has been so obliging as to continue his good offices, and they are in the immediate charge of Mr. Remsen. With sentiments of very great esteem and regard, I have the honor, to be, &c.[1]

[1] Mr. Jefferson arrived at Norfolk on the 23d of November; and at Eppington in Chesterfield county, on his way to Monticello, received the above letter, and also another from President Washington on the same subject dated November 30th. In his reply he said that his inclinations led him to prefer his former station in France, to which it had been his intention to return.

"But" he added, "it is not for an individual to choose his post. You are to marshal us as may be best for the public good; and it is only in case of its being indifferent to you, that I would avail myself of the option you have so

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, 13 October, 1789.

SIR,

It being important to both countries, that the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States should be observed and performed with perfect and mutual good faith, and that a treaty of commerce should be concluded by them, on principles of reciprocal advantage to both, I wish to be ascertained of the sentiments and intentions of the court of London on these interesting subjects.

It appears to me most expedient to have these

kindly offered in your letter. If you think it better to transfer me to another post, my inclination must be no obstacle; nor shall it be, if there is any desire to suppress the office I now hold, or to diminish its grade. In either of these cases be so good as to signify to me by another line your ultimate wish, and I shall conform to it accordingly. If it should be to remain at New York, my chief comfort will be to work under your eye, my only shelter the authority of your name, and the wisdom of measures to be dictated by you and implicitly executed by me. Whatever you may please to decide, I do not see, that the matters, which have called me hither, will permit me to shorten the stay I originally asked; that is to say, to set out on my journey northward till the month of March. As early as possible in that month, I shall have the honor of paying my respects to you in New York."—December 15th.

On this subject Mr. Madison wrote to the President as follows:

"A few days before I was allowed to set out for New York, I took a ride to Monticello. The answer of Mr. Jefferson to the notification of his appointment will no doubt have explained the state of his mind on the subject. I was sorry to find him so little biassed in favor of the domestic service allotted to him, but was glad that his difficulties seemed to result chiefly from what I take to be an erroneous view of the kind and quantity of business annexed to that, which constituted the foreign department. He apprehends that it will far exceed the latter, which has of itself no terrors to him. On the other hand, it was supposed, and I believe truly, that the domestic part will be very trifling, and for that reason improper to be made a distinct department. After all, if the whole business can be executed by any one man, Mr. Jefferson must be equal to it. All whom I have heard speak on the subject are remarkably solicitous for his acceptance, and I flatter myself, that they will not in the event be disappointed."—Georgetown, January 4th, 1790.

inquiries made informally, by a private agent; and, understanding that you will soon be in London, I desire you in that capacity, and on the authority and credit of this letter, to converse with his Britannic Majesty's ministers on these points, namely, whether there be any and what objections to performing those articles in the treaty, which remain to be performed on his part; and whether they incline to a treaty of commerce with the United States on any and what terms.

This communication ought regularly to be made to you by the Secretary of State; but, that office not being at present filled, my desire of avoiding delays induces me to make it under my own hand. It is my wish to promote harmony and mutual satisfaction between the two countries; and it would give me great pleasure to find that the result of your agency, in the business now committed to you, will conduce to that end. I am, Sir, yours, &c.

TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

NEW YORK, 13 October, 1789.

SIR,

My letter to you, herewith enclosed, will give you the credence necessary to enable you to do the business, which it commits to your management, and which I am persuaded you will readily undertake.

Your inquiries will commence by observing, that, as the present constitution of government, and of the courts established in pursuance of it, removes the objections heretofore made to putting the United States

in possession of their frontier posts, it is natural to expect from the assurances of his Majesty and the national good faith, that no unnecessary delays will take place. Proceed then to press a speedy performance of the treaty respecting that object.

Remind them of the article by which it was agreed, that negroes belonging to our citizens should not be carried away, and of the reasonableness of making compensation for them. Learn with precision, if possible, what they mean to do on this head.

The commerce between the two countries you well understand. You are apprized of the sentiments and feelings of the United States on the present state of it; and you doubtless have heard, that, in the late session of Congress, a very respectable number of both houses were inclined to a discrimination of duties unfavorable to Britain, and that it would have taken place but for conciliatory considerations, and the probability that the late change in our government and circumstances would lead to more satisfactory arrangements.

Request to be informed, therefore, whether they contemplate a treaty of commerce with the United States, and on what principles or terms in general. In treating this subject, let it be strongly impressed on your mind, that the privilege of carrying our productions in our vessels to their Islands, and of bringing in return the productions of those Islands to our own ports and markets, is regarded here as of the highest importance; and you will be careful not to countenance any idea of our dispensing with it in a

treaty. Ascertain, if possible, their views on this point; for it would not be expedient to commence negotiations without previously having good reasons to expect a satisfactory termination of them.

It may also be well for you to take a proper occasion of remarking, that their omitting to send a minister here, when the United States sent one to London, did not make an agreeable impression on this country; and request to know what would be their future conduct on similar occasions.

It is in my opinion very important, that we avoid errors in our system of policy respecting Great Britain; and this can only be done by forming a right judgment of their disposition and views. Hence you will perceive how interesting it is, that you obtain the information in question, and that the business be so managed, as that it may receive every advantage, which abilities, address, and delicacy can promise and afford. I am, Sir, yours, &c.[1]

[1] Morris in his first interview with the Duke of Leeds, on March 29th, outlined the wishes of the President as given in this letter, and was well received; but by September, when Morris returned to France, nothing definite had been concluded upon any of the subjects in dispute. In June following Colonel William S. Smith arrived in America, bearing reports of some conversations he had held with British officials, but they were no more conclusive than Morris'. —Sparks' *Washington*, x., 168; Madison's *Writings*, i., 537.

As there was now a recess of Congress, which had been adjourned from the 29th of September to the 1st of January, the President resolved to embrace this opportunity to make a tour through the Eastern States. He left New York, accompanied by his secretaries, Mr. Lear and Mr. Jackson, on the 15th of October. Travelling in his own carriage by the way of New Haven, Hartford, Worcester, Boston, Salem, and Newburyport, he reached Portsmouth in New Hampshire on the 31st, having been attended nearly the whole distance by military escorts, which were prepared to receive him at different points on the route. In all the principal towns, also, he was greeted with public addresses,

TO JOHN HANCOCK.

WESTON, 23 October, 1789.

SIR,

I have this moment received your Excellency's polite letter of to-day, and have the honor to inform you, that, in consequence of suggestions made by the gentlemen from Boston, and the deputy adjutant-general, (whom I met at Worcester) this morning, that it would make it more convenient for the troops, many of whom lived at a distance from the place of parade, if I should pass through Cambridge at an earlier hour than I intended, I thought it best to alter the time of my arrival at that place, which I had the pleasure to mention to your Excellency in my letter of yesterday; and the alteration, which I had made, I immediately communicated to you by a letter, which the gentlemen from Boston were so kind as to take charge of. But lest any accident should prevent that letter from getting to your hands, I would here mention, that it is my determination to be at Cambridge to-morrow at ten o'clock, and from thence proceed to Boston as soon as circumstances will permit, where it is probable I may arrive by twelve o'clock; and I will do myself the honor to accept your Excellency's polite invitation of taking an informal dinner with you.

I have the honor to be, &c.[1]

the ringing of bells, entertainments, and every demonstration of joy from the whole body of the people. He returned through the country from Portsmouth to Hartford by a different road from the one he had before taken, and arrived in New York on the 13th of November.—*Sparks*. His diary of this journey has been printed under the editorship of Benson J. Lossing.

[1] This visit to Boston occasioned a somewhat amusing exchange of words between the President and Governor Hancock on a point of etiquette. On Octo-

TO BEVERLEY RANDOLPH, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

NEW YORK, 22 November, 1789.

SIR,

From the original letter, which I forward herewith, your Excellency will comprehend the nature of a proposal for introducing and establishing the woollen manufactory in the State of Virginia. In the present stage of population and agriculture, I do not pretend to determine how far that plan may be practicable and advisable; or, in case it should be deemed so,

ber 21st Hancock wrote offering his house for Washington's use during his visit, and informing him of the measures taken for his reception:

"As governor of the commonwealth I feel it to be my duty to receive your visit with such tokens of respect, as may answer the expectations of my constituents, and may in some measure express the high sentiments of respect they feel towards you. I have therefore issued orders for proper escorts to attend you, and Colonel Hall, deputy adjutant-general, will wait upon you at Worcester, and will inform you of the disposition I have made of the troops at Cambridge, under the command of General Brooks, and request, that you would be so obliging as to pass that way to the town, where you will receive such other tokens of respect from the people, as will serve further to evince how gratefully they recollect your exertions for their liberties, and their confidence in you as President of the United States of America. The gentlemen of the Council will receive you at Cambridge, and attend you to town."

To this Washington replied from Brookfield, October 22d, outlining his progress, and adding:

"I am highly sensible of the honor intended me. But could my wish prevail, I should desire to visit your metropolis without any parade or extraordinary ceremony. From a wish to avoid giving trouble to private families, I determined, on leaving New York, to decline the honor of any invitation to quarters, which I might receive while on my journey; and, with a view to observe this rule, I had requested a gentleman to engage lodgings for me during my stay at Boston. I beg your Excellency to be persuaded of the grateful sense, which I entertain, of the honor you intended to confer on me, and I desire to assure you of the respectful regard with which I am, &c."

Hancock, regretting that his house could not be accepted, then requested that Washington should arrive in Boston some hours before he had planned, and that he and the gentlemen of his suite should dine with hin *en famille* on Saturday, at any hour that the circumstances of the day will admit. The arrangements of the receiving committee allowed the first to be done, and the

whether any or what public encouragement ought to be given to facilitate its execution. I have however no doubt, as to the good policy of increasing the number of sheep in every State. By a little legislative encouragement the farmers of Connecticut have, in two years past, added one hundred thousand to their former stock. In my late tour through the eastern States I found, that the manufacturers of woollens (for the manufacture of woollens is carried on there to very considerable extent and advantage)

President accepted. Not only did some differences between the Governor and the civic committee occur to delay matters (detailed in a letter of Benjamin Russell, printed in Sparks' *Washington*, x., 491), but the Governor insisted that the President should make the first visit upon him. Learning of this Washington went direct to the house prepared for him, a boarding-house on the corner of Tremont and Court streets, kept by Joseph Ingersoll, and, it is said, sent Major Jackson to the Governor, with a message that if Hancock's health permitted him to receive company, it would admit of his visiting the President. In the evening the friends of the Governor induced him to recede from his position, which led to the following interchange of notes :

GOVERNOR HANCOCK TO PRESIDENT WASHINGTON.

"Sunday, 26 October, half past twelve o'clock.

"The Governor's best respects to the President. If at home, and at leisure, the Governor will do himself the honor to pay his respects in half an hour. This would have been done much sooner, had his health in any degree permitted. He now hazards every thing, as it respects his health, for the desirable purpose."

THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY.

"Sunday, 26 October, one o'clock.

"The President of the United States presents his best respects to the Governor, and has the honor to inform him, that he shall be at home till two o'clock.

"The President needs not express the pleasure it will give him to see the Governor; but, at the same time, he most earnestly begs that the Governor will not hazard his health on the occasion."

Fisher Ames said "The gout came so opportunely last Saturday, that it has been doubtful whether his [Hancock's] humility would be gratified with the sight of his *superior*."

preferred the wool raised in Virginia for its fineness, to that raised in more northern parts of the continent. If a greater quantity of wool could be produced, and if the hands, which are often in a manner idle, could be employed in manufacturing it, a spirit of industry might be promoted, a great diminution might be made in the annual expenses of individual families, and the public would eventually be exceedingly benefited.

Under these impressions I have thought proper to transmit the proposal, and will only add, that, if it should be judged expedient to submit the subject to the legislature, or if any private company should engage in promoting the business, the necessity of keeping the manufacturer's name concealed would undoubtedly occur; as a premature knowledge of it might not only frustrate the success of the project, but also subject the person principally concerned to the most distressing consequences. I have the honor to be, &c.

TO JAMES McHENRY.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

NEW YORK, 30 November, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter of the 14th instant, and in consequence of the suggestions contained therein, added to other considerations which occurred to me, I have thought it best to return Judge [Robert Hanson] Harrison his commission, and I sincerely hope, that upon a further consideration of the subject he

may be induced to revoke his former determination, and accept the appointment.[1]

Mr. [Thomas] Johnson has likewise declined his appointment of district judge, and I have no information of Mr. [Richard] Potts the attorney, or Mr. [Nathaniel] Ramsay the marshal, having accepted their commissions. Thus circumstanced with respect to Maryland, I am unwilling to make a new appointment of judge for that district, until I can have an assurance, or at least a strong presumption, that the person appointed will accept; for it is to me an unpleasant thing to have commissions of such high importance returned; and it will, in fact, have a tendency to bring the government into discredit.

Mr. [Alexander Contee] Hanson is the person, whom I now have it in contemplation to bring forward as district judge of Maryland, and shall do so, provided I can obtain an assurance, that such an appointment would be acceptable to him. But as I cannot take any direct measures to draw from him a sentiment on this head, I must request, my dear Sir, that you will be so good as to get for me, if you can, such information upon the subject as will enable me to act with confidence in it, and convey the same to me as soon as possible. I shall leave to your prudence and discretion the mode of gaining this knowledge. It is a delicate matter, and will not bear any thing like a direct application, if there is the least cause to apprehend a refusal. I have observed in the papers, that Mr. Hanson has been appointed chancel-

[1] Washington's letter to Harrison is printed by *Sparks*, x., 52.

lor of the State since the death of Mr. [John] Rogers. What the emoluments of this office are, or its tenure, I know not, therefore can form no opinion how far it may operate in this matter.

Mr. Johnson's resignation came to hand too late to admit of a new appointment, and information to be given of it before the time fixed by the act for holding the first District Court in Maryland. However, if this had not been the case, I should hardly have hazarded a new appointment for the reasons before mentioned, until I had good grounds to believe it would be accepted.

Should it be found, that the office of district judge would not be acceptable to Mr. Hanson, Mr. Paca has been mentioned for that appointment; and, although his sentiments have not been altogether in favor of the general government, and a little adverse on the score of paper emissions, I do not know but his appointment on some other accounts might be a proper thing. However, this will come more fully under consideration if Mr. Hanson should not wish to be brought forward; and, in that case, I will thank you to give me information relative to Mr. Paca.[1]

[1] On this point Mr. McHenry answered: "I have had a long conversation with Mr. Paca. I have every reason to say, that he will make every exertion in his power to execute the trust in the most unexceptionable manner. I believe, also, that the appointment will be highly gratifying to him, and I think it may have political good consequences."—Annapolis, December 10th.

"Mr. Johnson has, as you supposed, declined the appointment of judge to the district of Maryland, and I have lately appointed Mr. Paca to fill that office. Mr. Thomas, whom you recommend for that place, undoubtedly possesses all those qualifications, which you have ascribed to him; and, so far as my own knowledge of that gentleman extends, he is justly entitled to the reputation which he sustains. But in appointing persons to office, and more espe-

Mr. Gustavus Scott and Mr. Robert Smith of Baltimore have also been mentioned for the office; but the age and inexperience of the latter is in my opinion an insuperable objection; for, however good the qualifications or promising the talents of Mr. Smith may be, it will be expected that the important offices of the general government, and more especially those of the judges, should be filled by men who have been tried and proved. I thank you, my good Sir, for your kind wishes for my health and happiness, and reciprocate them with sincerity. With very great regard, I am, &c.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.

NEW YORK, 30 November, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 8th of October gave me pleasure, as I not only entertain hopes, but shall fully expect from the contents of it, to see you in the office of attorney-general when the purposes mentioned by you for the delay are answered.

I shall now mention some matters to you in confidence. Mr. Pendleton's declining to accept the appointment of district judge has embarrassed me, and this embarrassment was not a little increased by the

cially in the judicial department, my views have been much guided to those characters, who have been conspicuous in their country; not only from an impression of their services, but upon a consideration, that they had been tried, and that a readier confidence would be placed in them by the public than in others perhaps of equal merit, who had never been proved. Upon this principle Mr. Paca certainly stands prior to Mr. Thomas, although the latter may possess in as high a degree every qualification requisite in a judge."—*Washington to William Fitzhugh*, 24 December, 1789.

lateness of the period at which (being on a tour through the eastern States) I came to the knowledge of it. When I was about to make the nominations in the judiciary for the Union, the character and abilities of Mr. Wythe did not escape me; and I accordingly consulted such gentlemen from the State of Virginia, (then in this city,) as I thought most likely to have some knowledge of his inclinations. Their opinion was, that, as he had lately been appointed sole Chancellor, an office to which by inclination he was led, and engaged in other avocations, which engrossed his attention and appeared to afford him pleasure, he would not exchange the former for a federal appointment. However, since these appointments have been announced, I have heard that it has been the wonder of some in Virginia, that Mr. Wythe should have been *overlooked.* The cause (if the epithet applies) I have assigned. And if there was reason to apprehend a refusal in the first instance, the non-acceptance of Colonel Pendleton would be no inducement to him to come forward in the second. To consult him through the medium of a friend there was not time, as the third Tuesday in December is the day appointed for holding the District Court in the district of Virginia, and to hazard a second refusal I was on many accounts unwilling to do. Under these circumstances I have, by the powers of the constitution, appointed Mr. Cyrus Griffin during the recess of the Senate.

My reasons for this appointment in preference to any other, except Mr. Wythe, are, because he has,

(as I am informed,) been regularly bred to the law, has been in the court of appeals, has been discontinued of the Council in Virginia, (contrary to the expectation of his friends here at the time, who thought that his temporary appointment as a negotiator with the southern Indians would not bring him under the disqualifying law of Virginia,) and thereby thrown entirely out of employment, and because I had it in my power to ascertain with precision his acceptance. I shall say nothing of his being a man of amiable character and of competent abilities, because in these respects some of the present judges in that State may be his equals; but to what I have said may be added, he has no employment now, and needs the emolument of one as much as any of them.

I will not conceal from you, that two motives have induced me to give this explanation; the first, if a favorable opportunity should present itself, is, that Mr. Wythe may, in a delicate manner, be informed of the principles by which I was governed in this business; the second, that my inducements to appoint Mr. Griffin may not, (if the propriety of it should be questioned,) be altogether unknown. For having in every appointment endeavored, as far as my own knowledge of characters extended, or information could be obtained, to select the fittest and most acceptable persons, and having reason to believe that the appointments, which have been made heretofore, have given very general satisfaction, it would give me pain if Mr. Wythe or any

of his friends should conceive, that he has been passed by from improper motives. I have prejudices against none, nor partialities which shall bias me in favor of any one. If I err, then, my errors will be of the head, and not of the heart of, my dear Sir, your most obedient, &c.[1]

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

NEW YORK, 17 December, 1789.

SIR,

As I am uncertain of the condition, and even the office, in which the papers containing accounts of our disbursements for subsistence of British prisoners remain; and as it is not improbable, that some negotiations may (whenever our union under the general government shall be completed) take place between the United States and Great Britain, in which an accurate understanding of those accounts will become necessary, I have therefore tho't proper to suggest the expediency of having some immediate attention paid to them.

Notwithstanding, on as fair a statement of expendi-

[1] In reply, Mr. Randolph said: "You may be assured, that Mr. Wythe neither wished nor expected to be the successor of Mr. Pendleton."—December 15th. Again: "I found a fortunate moment for a conversation with Mr. Wythe. He repeated what I wrote to you in answer to your favor of the 30th ultimo. Indeed he declared himself happy in believing, that he held a place in your esteem, and that he was confident you had looked towards him with every partiality, which he could wish. Nay, without going into the detail of our discourse, I am convinced from his own mouth, that the knowledge of his present situation is considered by him as the only reason of a seat on the bench not being tendered to him."—Richmond, December 23d.

tures as could now be made, much property must undoubtedly be lost by the United States for want of vouchers, and by reason of the negligence with which the business was conducted on our part, yet I was always impressed with an idea, that, under all these disadvantageous circumstances, a very considerable balance would still be found in our favor. My present wish is, to have the subject so far investigated, as that we might not commit ourselves by bringing forward accounts, which had better continue dormant. Shou'd there be no danger of that kind, it would then be desirable to have the business placed in a state, which might enable us to speak from a general knowledge of facts, and in a proper tone, in case a demand of the American posts held by the King of Great Britain should draw pecuniary subjects into discussion. I believe lists of property, carried away by the British at the time when they evacuated the posts they had occupied during the late war, are lodged in the office of Foreign Affairs. I am, Sir, &c.

TO JABEZ BOWEN.

NEW YORK, 27 December, 1789.

SIR,

The letters with which you have been pleased to favor me, dated in October, and the 15th of the present month, came duly to hand, and are entitled to my thanks for the communications contained in them. As it is possible the conduct of Rhode Island, (if perse-

vered in,) may involve questions in Congress, which will call for my official decisions, it is not fit that I should express more than a wish, in reply to your letter, that the legislature at the coming session would consider well before it again rejects the proposition for calling a convention to decide on their accession to, or rejection of, the present government. The adoption of it by North Carolina has left them *entirely* alone.[1] I am much obliged to you for your good wishes, and with esteem and regard, I am, Sir, &c.

[1] At the first convention in North Carolina the Constitution was not ratified; but at a second convention, held in November, 1789, it was adopted by a majority of more than two to one, the vote being one hundred and ninety-three in the affirmative, and seventy-five in the negative. The legislature of Rhode Island, during the session in September, had sent an address to "The President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives of the *Eleven* United States of America in Congress assembled," in which were contained explanations of the course pursued by that State in not adopting the Constitution.

The address was on the whole conciliatory, and gave indications that the tone of opposition was somewhat subsiding in Rhode Island, and would in no event interrupt the harmony of the Union. After stating the grounds upon which the objections of Rhode Island had mainly rested, the governor closes his communication, in behalf of the legislature, as follows: "We feel ourselves attached by the strongest ties of friendship, kindred, and of interest to our sister States; and we cannot, without the greatest reluctance, look to any other quarter for those advantages of commercial intercourse which we conceive to be more natural and reciprocal between them and us."—*Sparks.*

Nearly six months later Washington was given an opportunity of acknowledging the ratification by Rhode Island of the Constitution:

"Having now attained the desirable object of uniting under one general government all those States, which were originally confederated, we have a right to expect, with the blessing of a divine Providence, that our country will afford us all those domestic enjoyments, of which a free people only can boast; and at the same time secure that respectability abroad, which she is entitled to by nature and from circumstances. Since the bond of union is now complete, and we once more consider ourselves as one family, it is much to be hoped, that reproaches will cease and prejudices be done away; for we should all remember, that we are members of that community, upon whose general success depends,

SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, JANUARY 8TH, 1790.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE
AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I embrace with great satisfaction the opportunity, which now presents itself, of congratulating you on the present favorable prospects of our public affairs. The recent accession of the important State of North Carolina to the constitution of the United States (of which official information has been received), the rising credit and respectability of our country, and the general and increasing good will towards the government of the Union, and the concord, peace, and plenty, with which we are blessed, are circumstances auspicious, in an eminent degree, to our national prosperity.

In resuming your consultations for the general good, you cannot but derive encouragement from the reflection, that the measures of the last session have been as satisfactory to your constituents, as the novelty and difficulty of the work allowed you to hope. Still further to realize their expectations, and to secure the blessings, which a gracious Providence has placed within our reach, will, in the course of the present important session, call for the cool and deliberate exertion of your patriotism, firmness, and wisdom.

Among the many interesting objects, which will engage your attention, that of providing for the common defence will merit particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.

A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite; and their safety and interest require, that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent on others for essential, particularly for military, supplies.

---

our particular and individual welfare; and, therefore, if we mean to support the liberty and independence, which it has cost us so much blood and treasure to establish, we must drive far away the demon of party spirit and local reproach." —*Washington to Governor Arthur Fenner*, 4 June, 1790.

The proper establishment of the troops, which may be deemed indispensable, will be entitled to mature consideration. In the arrangements which may be made respecting it, it will be of importance to conciliate the comfortable support of the officers and soldiers with a due regard to economy.

There was reason to hope, that the pacific measures, adopted with regard to certain hostile tribes of Indians, would have relieved the inhabitants of our southern and western frontiers from their depredations. But you will perceive, from the information contained in the papers, which I shall direct to be laid before you, (comprehending a communication from the commonwealth of Virginia,) that we ought to be prepared to afford protection to those parts of the Union, and, if necessary, to punish aggressors.

The interest of the United States requires, that our intercourse with other nations should be facilitated by such provisions as will enable me to fulfil my duty in that respect, in the manner which circumstances may render most conducive to the public good; and, to this end, that the compensations, to be made to the persons who may be employed, should, according to the nature of their appointments, be defined by law, and a competent fund designated for defraying the expenses incident to the conduct of our foreign affairs.

Various considerations also render it expedient, that the terms, on which foreigners may be admitted to the rights of citizens, should be speedily ascertained by a uniform rule of naturalization.

Uniformity in the currency, weights, and measures of the United States is an object of great importance, and will, I am persuaded, be duly attended to.

The advancement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, by all proper means, will not, I trust, need recommendation. But I cannot forbear intimating to you the expediency of giving effectual encouragement, as well to the introduction of new and useful inventions from abroad, as to the exertions of skill and genius in producing them at home; and of facilitating the intercourse between the distant parts of our country by a due attention to the post-office and post-roads.

Nor am I less persuaded, that you will agree with me in opinion, that there is nothing which can better deserve your patron-

age than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community, as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways; by convincing those who are intrusted with the public administration, that every valuable end of government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people; and by teaching the people themselves to know, and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority, between burthens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the laws.

Whether this desirable object will be the best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established, by the institution of a national university, or by any other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the legislature.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I saw with peculiar pleasure, at the close of the last session, the resolution entered into by you, expressive of your opinion, that an adequate provision for the support of the public credit is a matter of high importance to the national honor and prosperity. In this sentiment I entirely concur. And to a perfect confidence in your best endeavors to devise such a provision as will be truly consistent with the end, I add an equal reliance on the cheerful co-operation of the other branch of the legislature. It would be superfluous to specify inducements to a measure, in which the character and permanent interests of the United States are so obviously and so deeply concerned, and which has received so explicit a sanction from your declaration.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE
AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

I have directed the proper officers to lay before you respectively such papers and estimates as regard the affairs particularly recommended to your consideration, and necessary to convey to you that information of the State of the Union, which it is my duty to afford.

The welfare of our country is the great object to which our cares and efforts ought to be directed; and I shall derive great satisfaction from a co-operation with you in the pleasing though arduous task of insuring to our fellow-citizens the blessings which they have a right to expect from a free, efficient, and equal government.

TO CATHARINE MACAULAY GRAHAM.

NEW YORK, 9 January, 1790.

MADAM,

Your obliging letter dated in October last has been received, and, as I do not know when I shall have more leisure than at present to throw together a few observations in return for yours, I take up my pen to do it by this early occasion.

In the first place I thank you for your congratulatory sentiments on the event, which has placed me at the head of the American government, as well as for the indulgent partiality, which it is to be feared, however, may have warped your judgment too much in my favor. But you do me no more than justice in supposing, that, if I had been permitted to indulge my first and fondest wish, I should have remained in a private station.

Although neither the present age nor posterity may possibly give me full credit for the feelings, which

I have experienced on this subject, yet I have a consciousness that nothing short of an absolute conviction of duty could ever have brought me upon the scenes of public life again. The establishment of our new government seemed to be the last great experiment for promoting human happiness by a reasonable compact in civil society. It was to be in the first instance, in a considerable degree, a government of accommodation as well as a government of laws. Much was to be done by prudence, much by conciliation, much by firmness. Few, who are not philosophical spectators, can realize the difficult and delicate part, which a man in my situation had to act. All see, and most admire, the glare which hovers round the external happiness of elevated office. To me there is nothing in it beyond the lustre, which may be reflected from its connexion with a power of promoting human felicity.

In our progress towards political happiness my station is new, and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely an action, the motive to which may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct, which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent. Under such a view of the duties inherent to my arduous office, I could not but feel a diffidence in myself on the one hand, and an anxiety for the community, that every new arrangement should be made in the best possible manner, on the other. If, after all my humble but faithful endeavors to advance the felicity of my country and mankind, I may indulge a

hope that my labors have not been altogether without success, it will be the only real compensation I can receive in the closing scenes of life.

On the actual situation of this country under its new government, I will, in the next place, make a few remarks. That the government, though not actually perfect, is one of the best in the world, I have little doubt. I always believed, that an unequivocally free and equal representation of the people in the legislature, together with an efficient and responsible executive, were the great pillars on which the preservation of American freedom must depend. It was indeed next to a miracle, that there should have been so much unanimity in points of such importance among such a number of citizens, so widely scattered, and so different in their habits in many respects, as the Americans were. Nor are the growing unanimity and increasing good will of the citizens to the government less remarkable, than favorable circumstances. So far as we have gone with the new government, (and it is completely organized and in operation,) we have had greater reason, than the most sanguine could expect, to be satisfied with its success. Perhaps a number of accidental circumstances have concurred with the real effects of the government to make the people uncommonly well pleased with their situation and prospects. The harvests of wheat have been remarkably good, the demand for that article from abroad is great, the increase of commerce is visible in every port, and the number of new manufactures introduced in one year is astonishing. I have lately

made a tour through the eastern States. I found the country in a great degree recovered from the ravages of war; the Towns flourishing, and the people delighted with a government instituted by themselves, and for their own good. The same facts I have also reason to believe, from good authority, exist in the southern States.

By what I have just observed, I think you will be persuaded, that the ill-boding politicians, who prognosticated that America never would enjoy any fruits from her independence, and that she would be obliged to have recourse to a foreign power for protection, have at least been mistaken. I shall sincerely rejoice to see, that the American revolution has been productive of happy consequences on both sides of the Atlantic. The renovation of the French constitution is indeed one of the most wonderful events in the history of mankind, and the agency of the Marquis de Lafayette in a high degree honorable to his character. My greatest fear has been, that the nation would not be sufficiently cool and moderate in making arrangements for the security of that liberty, of which it seems to be fully possessed.

Mr. Warville, the French gentleman you mention, has been in America and at Mount Vernon, but has returned some time since to France. Mrs. Washington is well, and desires her compliments may be presented to you. We wish the happiness of your fireside, as we also long to enjoy that of our own at Mount Vernon. Our wishes, you know were limited, and I think that our plans of living will now be

deemed reasonable by the considerate part of our species. Her wishes coincide with my own, as to simplicity of dress, and every thing which can tend to support propriety of character, without partaking of the follies of luxury and ostentation. I am with great regard, &c.

TO CHARLES PINCKNEY, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

[PRIVATE.]

NEW YORK, 11 January, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

Although it is not in my power to enter so fully as I could wish into an investigation of the interesting subjects, discussed in your letter of the 14th of last month, yet I would not deny myself the satisfaction of acknowledging the receipt of it, and of expressing my obligations for the sentiments, which your Excellency has been pleased to suggest.[1]

[1] Governor Pinckney's letter related to a treaty with Spain, and with the southern Indians. As to the former, he said :

" Upon the conclusion of peace I believe it was the intention of that court to enter into a treaty of amity and commerce with us, to be our friends, and to do every thing in their power to promote the intercourse. But they mistook the means ; for, instead of forming a treaty upon the terms, which would have ensured a reciprocity of benefits, they thought the best way to remove every future ground of difference, to prevent our becoming dangerous neighbors, and to keep us at a distance, was to propose the surrender of a right, as degrading to the honor, as it would have been injurious to the interests, of the Union. I happened to be in Congress at the time the proposal was brought forward through the then secretary, Mr. Jay. Having more leisure, or having more maturely considered the offer, I was requested by the opponents to prepare an answer to the reasons, which Mr. Jay offered in support of Mr. Gardoqui's proposals. This I did, and being afterwards desired by many of the southern members to furnish them with copies, I had a few printed, which were confi-

A new monarch having succeeded to the throne of Spain, it remains to be ascertained how far his court may insist upon those exclusive claims to the navigation of the Mississippi, which have hitherto

dentially delivered to some of my friends for their information upon a subject, which at that time very much engaged the attention of the public.

"The court of Spain, being defeated in this measure, have appeared to me entirely to change their ground. The original and I believe the only reason of Spain's anxiety to conclude a treaty with us was, to secure her American continental possessions from being at any time the object of invasion or insult from the southern, or more probably the western, inhabitants of the Union. They ever dreaded the settlement of the western territory, and looked forward to the time when it would become necessary for its inhabitants to use the Mississippi, as a period very likely to produce those uneasinesses, which would perhaps end in the invasion of their dominions. Had they at first proposed a solid and reciprocally beneficial treaty, it would have prevented, or at least postponed for a number of years, any danger of this sort; but having, as I have already observed, wrongly conceived of the means of effecting it, and being foiled in their first attempt, they have now changed their ground. They are endeavoring, by every exertion in their power, to attach, not only the southern Indians, but as many as they possibly can of the inhabitants of the western territory, closely to their interest."—*Charleston*, December 14th, 1789.

These views, respecting the disposition of the Spanish court towards the United States at the time of the general treaty of peace, may at least be doubted. The refusal of that court to receive Mr. Carmichael in the character of *Chargé de Affaires*, after the signing of the treaty, and the reluctance with which they at last assented, through the personal agency of Lafayette, would not indicate any desire to form ties of alliance with the United States. —*Diplomatic Correspondence*, vol. x., p. 30. Nor did the tedious manner in which the negotiation was carried on by Mr. Gardoqui, after he came to the United States, and the claims made by him, present the designs of the Spanish cabinet under a more favorable aspect. Much light on this subject may be gathered from a curious *Memoir*, addressed by Count d'Aranda to the King of Spain immediately after signing the treaty of Paris, in which the independence of the United States was recognized by Spain. See *L'Espagne sous les Rois de la Maison de Bourbon*, tom. vi., p. 45. This work is a French translation of Coxe's *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon*, and contains, beside the above Memoir by Count d'Aranda, several important additions, particularly in regard to the policy and conduct of Spain during the American war.—*Sparks.*

prevented the conclusion of a treaty between the United States and that nation. Mr. Gardoqui went to Spain some time ago; nor have we received any thing official from thence since his departure. A private gentleman, (a man of good intelligence,) lately returned from Spain to America, mentions a report was believed when he sailed, that the Americans of the United States had formed a successful expedition against the Spanish territory in their neighborhood, and that the report had occasioned great sensations in the kingdom. Whatever may be the future policy of that nation, I am disposed to become as well acquainted with the merits of the subjects, which have been agitated between them and us since the war, as my other duties and avocations will admit. For this reason, in particular, I thank your Excellency for your confidential communication.

As to the subject of Indian affairs, I can only say in general, that your sentiments on the expediency of entering into treaties with those nations, upon just terms, perfectly coincide with my own. From the official report of the late commissioners for treating with the Creeks, &c., it seems almost certain, that the connexion of Mr. McGillivray with Spain was the principal cause for preventing the conclusion of the proposed treaty. Their report, (which is this day to be delivered by the Secretary at War to the Senate,) will indicate fully the progress and issue of that business, and the executive will probably be

possessed of such documents, as may be useful in taking ulterior measures.[1] For my own part, I am entirely persuaded, that the present general government will endeavor to lay the foundation for its proceedings in national justice, faith, and honor. But should the government, after having attempted in vain every reasonable pacific measure, be obliged to have recourse to arms for the defence of its citizens, I am also of opinion, that sound policy and good economy will point to a prompt and decisive effort, rather than to defensive and lingering operations.

Should your Excellency, afte the expiration of your office, prosecute your proposed voyage to France, you will find, I presume, most extraordinary events have taken place in that kingdom. Although all their political arrangements are not yet settled, I hope they will be happily, before the period to which you allude.

My late tour through the eastern States has been of salutary consequence in confirming my health. I have likewise had an opportunity of seeing how far the country is recovered from the ravages of war, and how well the inhabitants are disposed to support the general government.

Not being master of my own time, nor accustomed to make personal engagements, which from contingency might become impracticable, I can only say in regard to the last paragraph of your letter, that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to

[1] This report is printed in Lowrie & Clarke's *American State Papers*, vol. iv., p. 59.

have it in my power to visit all the southern States. With sentiments of the highest respect, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

NEW YORK, 21 January, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure to receive duly your letter, dated the 15th of December last; but I thought proper to delay answering or mentioning the contents of it, until after the arrival of Mr. Madison, who, I understood, had been with you. He arrived yesterday; and I now take the earliest opportunity of mentioning to you the result of my reflections, and the expediency of your deciding, at as early a period as may consist with your convenience, on the important subject before you.

Previous to any remarks on the nature of the office, to which you have been recently appointed, I will premise that I feel such delicacy and embarrassment, in consequence of the footing on which you have placed your final determination, as to make it necessary for me to recur to the first ground on which I rested the matter. In confidence, therefore, I will tell you plainly, that I wish not to oppose your inclinations, and that, after you shall have been made a little farther acquainted with the light in which I view the office of Secretary of State, it must be at your option to determine relative to your acceptance of it, or continuance in your office abroad.[1]

[1] "I wrote you on what footing I had placed the President's proposal to me to undertake the office of Secretary of State. His answer still left me at lib-

I consider the successful administration of the general government, as an object of almost infinite consequence to the present and future happiness of the citizens of the United States. I consider the office of secretary for the department of state very important on many accounts, and I know of no person, who in my judgment could better execute the duties of it than yourself. Its duties will probably be not quite so arduous and complicated in their execution, as you might have been led at the first moment to imagine. At least, it was the opinion of Congress, that, after the division of all the business of a domestic nature between the departments of the treasury, war, and state, those which would be comprehended in the latter might be performed by the same person, who should have the charge of conducting the department of foreign affairs. The experiment was to be made; and, if it shall be found, that the fact is different, I have little doubt that a farther arrangement or division of the business in the office of the department of state will be made in such manner as to enable it to be performed, under the superintendence of one man, with facility to himself, as well as with advantage and satisfaction to the public. Those observations, however, you will be pleased to remark, are merely matters of opinion. But, in order that you may be the better prepared to make your ultimate decision on

erty to accept it or return to France; but I saw plainly he preferred the former, and have learned from several quarters it will be generally more agreeable. Consequently, to have gone back would have exposed me to the danger of giving disgust, and I value no office enough for that. I am, therefore, now on my way to enter on the new office."—*Jefferson to Short*, 12 March, 1790.

good grounds, I think it necessary to add one fact, which is this, so far as I have been able to obtain information from all quarters, your late appointment has given very extensive and very great satisfaction to the public. My original opinion and wish may be collected from my nomination.

As to what you mention in the latter part of your letter, I can only observe, I do not know that any alteration is likely to take place in the commission from the United States to the court of France. The necessary arrangements, with regard to our intercourse with foreign nations, have never yet been taken up on a great scale by this government, because the department, which comprehended affairs of that nature, has never been properly organized, so as to bring the business well and systematically before the executive. If you should finally determine to take upon yourself the duties of the department of state, it would be highly requisite for you to come on immediately, as many things are required to be done while Congress is in session, rather that at any other time, and as in that case your presence might doubtless be much better dispensed with after a little time than at the present moment. Or, in all events, it will be essential that I should be informed of your conclusive option, so that, if you return to France, another person may be, at as early a day as possible, nominated to fill the department of state.

With sentiments of the highest regard and esteem, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH, ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

NEW YORK, 11 February, 1790.

SIR,

I have weighed with deliberate attention the contents of your letter of yesterday; and, although that consideration may result in an approbation of the ideas therein suggested, yet I do not at present feel myself authorized to give a sanction to the measures which you propose. For, as the constitution of the United States and the laws made under it must mark the line of my official conduct, I could not justify my taking a single step in any matter, which appeared to me to require their agency, without its being first obtained; and, so far as I have been able to form a judgment upon the objects held up to view in your letter, they cannot be effected without the operation of a law.

As an act must necessarily be passed to extend the judicial power of the United States to the State of North Carolina, it appears to me that a clause might be there introduced to establish that uniformity and precision in the business of the United States in each district, which you observe is highly proper to be effected, and to make such other regulations as may be thought necessary. I however only suggest this idea to you, that you may, if you think proper, mention it to such members of the Senate and House of Representatives as are acquainted with the subject, and thereby have the matter brought to view whenever the abovementioned act shall be under consideration. I am, with great esteem, &c.

TO DAVID STUART.

DEAR SIR, NEW YORK, 28 March, 1790.

* * * * * *

I am sorry such jealousies as you speak of should be gaining ground, and are poisoning the minds of the southern people ;[1] but admit the fact, which is alleged as the cause of them, and give it full scope, does it amount to more than what was known to every man of information before, at, and since the adoption of the constitution ? Was it not always believed, that there are some points which peculiarly interest the eastern States ? And did any one, who reads human nature, and more especially the character of the eastern people, conceive that they would not pursue them steadily by a combination of their force ?

[1] *From Dr. Stuart's Letter.*—"A spirit of jealousy, which may become dangerous to the Union, towards the eastern States, seems to be growing fast among us. It is represented, that the northern phalanx is so firmly united, as to bear down all opposition, while Virginia is unsupported, even by those whose interests are similar to hers. It is the language of all I have seen on their return from New York. Colonel Lee tells me, that many, who were warm supporters of the government, are changing their sentiments, from a conviction of the impracticability of union with States, whose interests are so dissimilar to those of Virginia. I fear the Colonel is one of the number. The late applications to Congress, respecting the slaves, will certainly tend to promote this spirit. It gives particular umbrage, that the Quakers should be so busy in this business. That they will raise up a storm against themselves, appears to me very certain. Mr. Madison's sentiments are variously spoken of ; so much so, that it is impossible to ascertain whether they are approved of by a majority or not. The commercial and most noisy part is certainly against them. It appears to me to be such a deviation from the plain and beaten track, as must make every creditor of the public tremble. His plan of discrimination is founded too much on principles of equity to please even those, who have advocated always a discrimination. If the public was to gain what the original holders lost in their sales, I believe it would have pleased this description of citizens better."—Abingdon, Virginia, March 15th.

Are there not other points, which equally concern the southern States? If these States are less tenacious of their interest, or if, whilst the eastern move in a solid phalanx to effect their views, the southern are always divided, which of the two is most to be blamed? That there is a diversity of interests in the Union none has denied. That this is the case, also, in every State is equally certain; and that it even extends to the counties of individual States can be as readily proved. Instance the southern and northern parts of Virginia, the upper and lower parts of South Carolina, &c. Have not the interests of these always been at variance? Witness the county of Fairfax. Have not the interests of the people of that county varied, or the inhabitants been taught to believe so? These are well known truths, and yet it did not follow, that separation was to result from the disagreement.

To constitute a dispute there must be two parties. To understand it well, both parties, and all the circumstances, must be fully heard; and, to accommodate differences, temper and mutual forbearance are requisite. Common danger brought the States into confederacy, and on their union our safety and importance depend. A spirit of accommodation was the basis of the present constitution. Can it be expected, then, that the southern or the eastern parts of the empire will succeed in all their measures? Certainly not. But I will readily grant, that more points will be carried by the latter than the former, and for the reason which has been mentioned, namely,

that, in all great national questions, they move in unison, whilst the others are divided. But I ask again, which is most blameworthy, those who see, and will steadily pursue their interest, or those who cannot see, or, seeing, will not act wisely? And I will ask another question, of the highest magnitude in my mind, to wit, if the eastern and northern States are dangerous *in union*, will they be less so *in separation?* If self-interest is their governing principle, will it forsake them, or be less restrained by such an event? I hardly think it would. Then, independent of other considerations, what would Virginia, (and such other States as might be inclined to join her,) gain by a separation? Would they not, most unquestionably, be the weaker party?

Men, who go from hence without feeling themselves of so much consequence as they wished to be considered, and disappointed expectants, added to malignant, designing characters, who miss no opportunity of aiming a blow at the constitution, paint highly on one side, without bringing into view the arguments, which are offered on the other.

It is to be lamented, that the editors of the different gazettes in the Union do not more generally and more correctly (instead of stuffing their papers with scurrility and nonsensical declamation, which few would read if they were apprized of the contents,) publish the debates in Congress on all great national questions. And this, with no uncommon pains, every one of them might do. The principles upon which the difference of opinion arises, as well as the deci-

sions, would then come fully before the public, and afford the best data for its judgment.

Mr. Madison on the question of discrimination was actuated, I am convinced, by the purest motives and most heart-felt conviction; but the subject was delicate, and perhaps had better never been stirred.

The assumption of the State debts by the United States is another subject, that has given rise to long and labored debates, without having yet taken a final form.

The memorial of the Quakers (and a very *mal-apropos* one it was) has at length been put to sleep, and will scarcely awake before the year 1808.[1]

I am, dear Sir, &c.

[1] At the annual meetings of the Quakers, held at Philadelphia and New York, in the year 1789, they had sent memorials to Congress, praying that measures might be adopted for the abolition of the slave-trade. These memorials were referred to a committee, who brought in a report, which was debated from time to time, and after various amendments was reported by the committee of the whole House as follows:

"That the migration or importation of such persons, as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, cannot be prohibited by Congress prior to the year 1808.

"That Congress have no authority to interfere in the emancipation of slaves, or in the treatment of them within any of the States; it remaining with the several States alone to provide any regulations therein, which humanity and true policy may require.

"That Congress have authority to restrain the citizens of the United States from carrying on the African trade, for the purpose of supplying foreigners with slaves, and of providing by proper regulations for the humane treatment, during their passage, of slaves imported by the said citizens into the States admitting such importation."

Such was considered by a majority of Congress as a just interpretation of the Constitution on this subject. The first paragraph is a recital of the clause in the Constitution, which refers to the slave-trade as then existing. By a prospective legislation Congress prohibited the importation of slaves by an act, which took effect in the year 1808. By a subsequent act, passed in the year 1820, the slave-trade was declared to be piracy, and punishable with death.—

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA LUZERNE.[1]

NEW YORK, 29 April, 1790.

SIR,

Your letter of the 17th of January, replete with politeness to myself and useful informations respecting public affairs, has but lately been received.[2]

In making my acknowledgments for the distinguished place I hold in your remembrance, and for the obliging terms in which you allude to my conduct in war and peace, I should do injustice to conceal the favorable sentiments, which were always entertained by myself and my countrymen of your private deportment and ministerial agency, while you resided in America. Those times, in which we always

Story's *Commentaries*, vol. iii., p. 205. For a condensed history of slavery in the United States, and of the progress of emancipation, see Kent's *Commentaries*, vol. i., p. 347, 2d edition. [Von Holst, *Constitutional History of the United States.*] Much information respecting colonial slavery, drawn from the best authorities, and judiciously arranged, is contained in Bancroft's *History of the United States*, vol. i., chap. 5. See also Walsh's *Appeal*, p. 306.—*Sparks.*

[1] M. de la Luzerne had been raised to the rank of Marquis, and was now the Ambassador from the Court of France in London.

[2] *From the Marquis de la Luzerne's Letter.*—"I dare flatter myself, that your Excellency does justice to the very tender and respectful attachment, which I have long entertained towards you, and that you will be persuaded of the great pleasure with which I have learned the success, that has followed the first movements of your administration. After having given freedom to your country, it was worthy of the virtues and great character of your Excellency to establish its happiness on a solid and permanent basis, which is assuredly the result of the new federal constitution, in framing which you assisted by your counsel, and which you now support, as much by the splendor of your talents and patriotism, as by the eminent situation confided to you by your fellow-citizens. They possess the advantage of enjoying more particularly your beneficence, and the honor of having you born among them; but I dare assure you, that the consideration which you enjoy throughout Europe, and particularly in my country, yields not even to that, which you have obtained in your native land; and, notwithstanding the prejudices of the people, with whom I here live, there is not one among them, who does not pronounce your name with sentiments of respect and veneration.

found you a sincere friend, were truly times of peril and distress. Now our situation is indeed much more eligible, and our prospects perhaps as good as could reasonably have been expected. We are recovering slowly from the calamities and burdens, with which we were almost overwhelmed by a long and expensive war. Our crops the year past have been more abundant, and our markets much better, than usual. These circumstances will assist in enabling our citizens to extricate themselves from their private and public debts. I hope a disposition will be found to prevail among us for doing justice, as far as the nature of the case will admit, to all who afforded us their assistance in the hour of adversity. In the arrangement of such new and complicated business, as must inevitably come before our general government, it is reasonably to be expected, that the proceedings will be slow. It is devoutly to be wished, that they may terminate in such just and wise measures, as will fully establish our happiness at home and credit abroad. I am much pleased with the interest you take in our national reputation, and the information you give that our credit is becoming so

All are acquainted with the services you have rendered to your country as their general in the course of the war, and with those, perhaps still greater, which you now render as a statesman in peace.

"The love of glory and of freedom, which led the Americans to surmount such great difficulties, must still prevail to establish the principles of justice towards those of their fellow-citizens and strangers, who assisted them in their distress; and I have seen with great pleasure, that, from the first moment in which you have appeared at the head of the federal government, the credit of the American nation has been established in every country of Europe, and that the confidence in her resources and means is infinitely better founded than in many of the older powers."—17 January, 1790.

respectable in Europe, under the influence of our new government.

You are right in conceiving, that nothing can be indifferent to me, which regards the welfare of the French nation. So far removed from that great theatre of political action, and so little acquainted with many of the minute circumstances, which may induce important decisions, as I am, it would be imprudent for me to hazard opinions, which might possibly be unfounded. Indeed, the whole business is so extraordinary in its commencement, so wonderful in its progress, and may be so stupendous in its consequences, that I am almost lost in the contemplation. Of one thing, however, you may rest perfectly assured, that nobody is more anxious for the happy issue of that business, than I am; as nobody can wish more sincerely for the prosperity of the French nation, than I do. Nor is it without the most sensible pleasure I learn, that our friend the Marquis de Lafayette has, in acting the arduous part which has fallen to his share, conducted himself with so much wisdom and apparently to such general satisfaction.

We, at this great distance from the northern parts of Europe, hear of wars and rumors of wars, as if they were the events or reports of another planet. What changes the death of the Emperor will occasion in the other cabinets of Europe, time is yet to inform us. A spirit for political improvements seems to be rapidly and extensively spreading through the European countries. I shall rejoice in seeing the condition of the human race happier than ever it has

hitherto been. But I should be sorry to see, that those, who are for prematurely accelerating those improvements, were making *more haste* than *good speed* in their innovations. So much prudence, so much perseverance, so much disinterestedness, and so much patriotism are necessary among the leaders of a nation, in order to promote the national felicity, that sometimes my fears nearly preponderate over my expectations. Better, however, will it be for me to leave such foreign matters to those, who are more competent to manage them, and to do as much good as I can, in the little sphere where I am destined to move at present. With sentiments of the highest esteem and consideration, I have the honor to be, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

NEW YORK, 3 June, 1790.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

Your kind letter of the 12th of January is, as your letters always are, extremely acceptable to me. By some chance its arrival had been retarded to this time. Conscious of your friendly dispositions for me, and realizing the enormous burden of public business with which you was oppressed, I felt no solicitude but that you should go directly forward, and happily effect your great undertakings. How much, how sincerely am I rejoiced, my dear Marquis, to find that things are assuming so favorable an aspect in France. Be assured, that you always have my best and most ardent wishes for your success; and that, if I have

not troubled you with letters of late, it was because I had nothing, which it was very essential to communicate, and because I knew how much better your time was employed, than in answering letters merely of a private nature.

You have doubtless been informed, from time to time, of the happy progress of our affairs. The principal difficulties, which opposed themselves in any shape to the prosperous execution of our government, seem in a great measure to have been surmounted. A good temper prevails among our citizens. Rhode Island has just now acceded to the constitution, and has thus united under the general government all the States of the original confederacy.[1] Vermont we hope will soon come within the pale of the Union. Two new States exist under the immediate direction of the general government, viz., that at the head of which is General St. Clair, and that which consists of the territory lately ceded by the State of North Carolina.

Our government is now happily carried into operation. Although some thorny questions still remain, it is to be hoped that the wisdom of those concerned in the national legislature will dispose of them prudently. A funding system is one of the subjects, which occasions most anxiety and perplexity. Yet our revenues have been considerably more productive than it was imagined they would be. In the last year the plentiful crops and great prices of grain have vastly augmented our remittances. The rate

[1] The ratification took place on the 29th of May at Newport.

of exchange is also much in our favor. Importations of European goods have been uncommonly extensive, and the duties payable into the public treasury proportionably so. Our trade to the East Indies flourishes. The profits to individuals are so considerable, as to induce more persons to engage in it continually. A single vessel, just arrived in this port, pays thirty thousand dollars to government. Two vessels, fitted out for the fur trade to the northwest coast of America, have succeeded well. The whole outfits of vessels and cargoes cost but seven thousand pounds. One is returning home, loaded with India produce, the other going back to the coast of America, and they have deposited one hundred thousand dollars of their profits in China. I mention this to show the spirit of enterprise that prevails. I hope and trust our commerce with the West India Islands, belonging to different nations, which is at present of no great consequence, will shortly be placed upon a better footing. As the people of this country are sensible of the generous conduct of the French nation, I can with great satisfaction give it as my decided opinion that the most friendly dispositions prevail on our side of the water towards that nation.

Many of your old acquaintances and friends are concerned with me in the administration of this government. By having Mr. Jefferson at the head of the Department of State, Mr. Jay of the Judiciary, Hamilton of the Treasury, and Knox of that of War, I feel myself supported by able coadjutors, who har-

monize extremely well together. I believe that these and the other appointments generally have given perfect satisfaction to the public. Poor Colonel Harrison, who was appointed one of the judges of the Supreme Court, and declined, is lately dead.[1]

I have a few days since had a severe attack of the peripneumony kind; but am now recovered, except in point of strength. My physicians advise me to more exercise and less application to business. I cannot, however, avoid persuading myself, that it is essential to accomplish whatever I have undertaken, though reluctantly, to the best of my abilities. But it is thought Congress will have a recess this summer, in which case I propose going for a while to Mount Vernon. With sentiments of the sincerest affection, I am, my dear Marquis, &c.

TO DAVID STUART.

NEW YORK, 15 June, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 2d instant came duly to hand. If there are any gazettes among my files at Mount Vernon, which can be of use to you, they are at your service.

Your description of the public mind in Virginia gives me pain. It seems to be more irritable, sour, and discontented, than, (from the information I receive,) it is in any other State in the Union, except

[1] Colonel Robert H. Harrison.

Massachusetts, which, from the same causes, but on quite different principles, is tempered like it.[1]

That Congress does not proceed with all that despatch, which people at a distance expect, and which,

[1] *From Dr. Stuart's Letter*: "I shall now endeavor to give you all the information I have been able to collect during my journey, respecting the present temper of mind of the people of Virginia, so far as I can judge from those I mixed with, and from what I could hear. I could wish indeed to speak more favorably of it; but it appears to me, that the late transactions of Congress have soured the public mind to a great degree; which was just recovering from the fever, which the slave business had occasioned, when the late much-agitated question of the State debts came on. With respect to the slave business, I am informed by Mr. Lomax, whom I met on his return from Pittsylvania, that great advantages had been taken of it in that distant quarter by many, who wished to purchase slaves, circulating a report, that Congress were about to pass an act for their general emancipation. This occasioned such an alarm, that many were sold for the merest trifle. The sellers were of course much enraged at Congress for taking up a subject they were precluded by the constitution from meddling with for the present, and thus furnishing the occasion for the alarm which induced them to sell. As the people in that part of the country were before much opposed to the government, it may naturally be supposed, that this circumstance has embittered them much more against it.

"As to the assumption of the State debts, I scarce think it would be a measure generally acceptable on any principles. On such as have been contended for, I hardly think it would be acquiesced in by this State. How far indeed a certain degree of shame or obstinacy natural to the human mind, which acts as a constant check on every rising disposition to depart from a cause or side once resolutely espoused, would continue to operate, I know not. But setting this aside, I think I should not be far wrong in saying there would be as nearly a unanimity of opinion for an opposition, as perhaps could ever be expected on any subject. There is, in general, I think, in consequence of these two instances, a strong apprehension, that the predictions relative to the grasping at power by unwarrantable constructions of the constitution will be verified. On these two subjects, at least, it is observed by most, (for there are some, who, after a proper liquidation and allowance of credit to the States for what has been paid, approve of the assumption,) that the constitution appeared so clear as to be incapable of misconstruction by those, who wished to make it a rule and guide to their conduct.

"At any rate, on a subject of such importance, which may be considered as doubtful in any shape under the constitution, it would at least have been prudent in the members to consult the general sentiments entertained of it in their respective States. But it really appears, as if they were so charmed with the

were they to hurry business, they possibly might, is not to be denied. That measures have been agitated, which are not pleasing to Virginia, and others, pleasing perhaps to her, but not so to some other States,

plenitude of their powers, as to have considered this a degrading step. A strong suspicion, too, is entertained, from the number of speculators, who have been traversing the State purchasing up State securities, that there is a good deal of selfishness mixed with the plan; and this perhaps causes it to be viewed with more particular dislike. Mr. Madison's conduct in this business has gained him great popularity, even among those who are illiberal enough to pass severe censures on his motives respecting his discrimination plan.

"As I passed through Richmond, the news of the rejection of the motion made by Mr. Lee, for opening the doors of the Senate, agreeably to his instructions from our legislature, had just arrived. It occasioned much disgust; but the manner of the rejection seemed to be as offensive as the rejection itself; it being said, that, after speaking two days ably on the subject without receiving an answer, the question was called for and lost; no one voting with him but his colleague and Mr. Maclay. It is supposed it will be productive of an application from our legislature to the other States, calling on them to join them in similar instructions to their members. It is a pity the public wish, as I believe it to be, in so trivial a matter, cannot be gratified. The slowness with which the business is carried on is another cause of complaint. Congress, it is said, sit only four hours a day, and like school-boys observe every Saturday as a holiday. If this be true, it is certainly trifling with their constituents in the extreme, who pay them liberally, and have therefore a right to expect more diligence from them. It is the more unfortunate, as it is represented, at the same time, that they generally live for two dollars a day.

"I have now gone through the catalogue of public discontents, and it really pains me much, and I believe every friend to the government, to think that there should be so much cause for them; and that a spirit so subversive of the true principles of the constitution, productive of jealousies alone, and fraught with such high ideas of their power, should have manifested itself at so early a period of the government. If Mr. Henry has sufficient boldness to aim the blow at its existence, which he has threatened, I think he can never meet with a more favorable opportunity, if the assumption should take place on the principles on which it has been contended for; and I understand, that, though lost at present, it is to be again brought on. But I doubt much whether he possesses so adventurous a spirit. It will be the fault of those, who are the promoters of such disgustful measures, if he ever does, or indeed any one else. I believe it has ever been considered as a maxim in governments recently established, and which depend on the affections of the people,

is equally unquestionable. Can it well be otherwise in a country so extensive, so diversified in its interests? And will not these different interests naturally produce in an assembly of representatives, who are to legislate for and to assimilate and reconcile them to the *general* welfare, long, warm, and animated debates? Most assuredly they will; and if there was the same propensity in mankind for investigating the motives, as there is for censuring the conduct of public characters, it would be found, that the censure so freely bestowed is oftentimes unmerited and uncharitable. For instance, the condemnation of Congress for sitting only four hours in the day. The fact is, by the established rules of the House of Representatives, no committee can sit whilst the House is sitting; and this is and has been for a considerable time from ten o'clock in the forenoon until three, often later, in the afternoon;

that what is rigidly right ought not to be the only standard of conduct with those who govern. Their inclinations and passions, too, must be consulted more or less in order to effect ultimately what is right. How much more ought this to be done, when it rests solely on a construction of their powers, whether a measure in contemplation ought to be carried into execution or not.

"A member of the Council, who wrote privately to Mr. Henry to know if he would accept of the office of Senator in Congress if appointed, showed me his answer; in which he declines it, and says he is too old to fall into those awkward imitations, which are now become fashionable. From this expression I suspect the old patriot has heard some extraordinary representations of the etiquette established at your levees. Those of his party no doubt think they promote themselves in his good opinion by such high coloring. It may not be amiss, therefore, to inform you that Bland is among the dissatisfied on this score. I am informed by good authority, that he represented that there was more pomp used there than at St. James's, where he had been, and that your bows were more distant and stiff. This happened at the governor's table in Richmond. By such accounts, I have no doubt the party think to keep alive the opposition and aversion to the government, and probably, too, to make proselytes to their opinions."—Abingdon, June 2d.

before and after which the business is going on in committees. If this application is not as much as most constitutions are equal to, I am mistaken.

Many other things, which undergo malignant constructions, would be found, upon a candid examination, to wear better faces than is given to them. The misfortune is, that the enemies to the government, always more active than its friends, and always upon the watch to give it a stroke, neglect no opportunity to aim one. If they tell truth, it is not the whole truth, by which means one side only of the picture is exhibited; whereas, if both sides were seen, it might and probably would assume a different form, in the opinion of just and candid men, who are disposed to measure matters by a Continental scale.

I do not mean, however, from what I have here said, to justify the conduct of Congress in all its movements; for some of these movements, in my opinion, have been injudicious, and others unseasonable; whilst the questions of assumption, residence, and other matters have been agitated with a warmth and intemperance, with prolixity and threats, which it is to be feared has lessened the dignity of that body, and decreased that respect, which was once entertained for it. And this misfortune is increased by many members, even among those who wish well to the government, ascribing in letters to their respective States, when they are defeated in a favorite measure, the worst motives for the conduct of their opponents; who, viewing matters through another medium, may and do retort in their turn, by which

means jealousies and distrusts are spread most impolitically far and wide, and will, it is to be feared, have a most unhappy tendency to injure our public affairs, which if wisely managed might make us, as we are now by Europeans thought to be, the happiest people upon earth. As a proof of it, our reputation has risen in every part of the globe, and our credit, especially in Holland (above par, where our funds are), has got higher than that of any nation in Europe, as appears by official advices just received. But the conduct we seem to be pursuing must soon bring us back to our former disreputable condition. The introduction of the Quaker memorial respecting slavery was, to be sure, not only *ill-timed*, but occasioned a great waste of time. The final decision, however, thereon, was as favorable as the proprietors of this species of property could well have expected, considering the light in which slavery is viewed by a large part of this Union.

The question of assumption has occupied a great deal of time, and no wonder, for it is certainly a very important question; and, under proper restrictions and scrutiny into accounts, will be found, I conceive, to be a just one. The cause, in which the expenses of the war were incurred, was a common cause. The States (in Congress) declared it so at the beginning, and pledged themselves to stand by each other. If, then, some States were harder pressed than others, or from particular and local circumstances contracted heavier debts, it is but reasonable, when this fact is clearly ascertained, though it is a sentiment

which I have not communicated here, that an allowance ought to be made them. Had the invaded and hard pressed States believed the case would have been otherwise, opposition would very soon, I believe, have changed to submission in them, and given a different termination to the war.[1]

In a letter of last year, to the best of my recollection, I informed you of the motives, which *compelled* me to allot a day for the reception of idle and ceremonious visits, (for it never has prevented those of sociability and friendship in the afternoon, or at any other time ;) but, if I am mistaken in this, the history of this business is simply and shortly as follows. Before the custom was established, which now accommodates foreign characters, strangers, and others,

[1] In his report on Public Credit, 9th January, 1790, Hamilton gave it as his full conviction "that an assumption of the debts of the particular States by the Union, and a like provision for them as for those of the Union, will be a measure of sound policy and substantial justice." He distinctly recognized that the principles of equitable settlement between the States and the United States would require all the moderation and wisdom of the government, and suggested that the balance in favor of each State be first determined, and then "to equalize the contributions of the States, let each be charged with its proportion of the aggregate of those balances, according to some equitable ratio, to be devised for that purpose." On this point were made the heaviest attacks, for it was claimed Virginia would suffer peculiarly, while Massachusetts and South Carolina would benefit as greatly. On these divisions the various States ranged themselves according to their interest, and early in April the opposition obtained a rejection of the scheme in the House, but its advocates still held to the measure. This was the situation when Washington wrote. Jefferson hinted that the scruples of those who, in favoring the Constitution, had argued the improbability of Congress laying taxes where the States could do it separately, stood in the way of the assumption scheme. The blocking of the bill for a permanent residence of Congress afforded an opportunity to play the one measure against the other, and a bargain was made that passed the assumption and removed the seat of government to the Potomac. The President did not escape some abuse on the result, and Jefferson, through whom the bargain was effected, regarded himself as "duped" by Hamilton.

who, from motives of curiosity, respect to the Chief Magistrate, or any other cause, are induced to call upon me, I was unable to attend to any business whatsoever; for gentlemen, consulting their own convenience rather than mine, were calling from the time I rose from breakfast, often before, until I sat down to dinner. This, as I resolved not to neglect my public duties, reduced me to the choice of one of these alternatives, either to refuse them *altogether*, or to appropriate a time for the reception of them. The former would, I well knew, be disgusting to many; the latter I expected would undergo animadversion and blazoning from those, who would find fault *with* or *without* cause. To please everybody was impossible. I therefore adopted that line of conduct, which combined public advantage with private convenience, and which in my judgment was unexceptionable in itself. That I have not been able to make bows to the taste of poor Colonel Bland, (who, by the by, I believe never saw one of them), is to be regretted, especially too, as (upon those occasions,) they were indiscriminately bestowed, and the best I was master of, would it not have been better to throw the veil of charity over them, ascribing their stiffness to the effects of age, or to the unskillfulness of my teacher, than to pride and dignity of office, which God knows has no charms for me? For I can truly say, I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and the representatives of every power in Europe.

These visits are optional. They are made without invitation. Between the hours of three and four every Tuesday I am prepared to receive them. Gentlemen, often in great numbers, come and go, chat with each other, and act as they please. A porter shows them into the room, and they retire from it when they please, and without ceremony. At their first entrance, they salute me, and I them, and as many as I can talk to, I do. What pomp there is in all this, I am unable to discover. Perhaps it consists in not sitting. To this, two reasons are opposed: first, it is unusual; secondly, which is a more substantial one, because I have no room large enough to contain a third of the chairs, which would be sufficient to admit it. If it is supposed, that ostentation, or the fashions of courts (which, by the by, I believe originate oftener in convenience, not to say necessity, than is generally imagined), gave rise to this custom, I will boldly affirm, that no supposition was ever more erroneous; for, if I was to give indulgence to my inclinations, every moment that I could withdraw from the fatigue of my station should be spent in retirement. That they are not, proceeds from the sense I entertain of the propriety of giving to every one as free access, as consists with that respect, which is due to the chair of government; and that respect, I conceive, is neither to be acquired nor preserved but by observing a just medium between much state and too great familiarity.

Similar to the above, but of a more sociable kind, are the visits every Friday afternoon to Mrs. Wash-

ington, where I always am. These public meetings, and a dinner once a week to as many as my table will hold, with the references *to and from* the different departments of state, and *other* communications with *all* parts of the Union, are as much, if not more, than I am able to undergo; for I have already had within less than a year, two severe attacks, the last worse than the first. A third, more than probable, will put me to sleep with my fathers. At what distance this may be I know not. Within the last twelve months I have undergone more and severer sickness, than thirty preceding years afflicted me with. Put it all together I have abundant reason, however, to be thankful, that I am so well recovered; though I still feel the remains of the violent affection of my lungs; the cough, pain in my breast, and shortness in breathing not having entirely left me. I propose in the recess of Congress to visit Mount Vernon; but when this recess will happen is beyond my ken, or the ken I believe of any of its members.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO CLEMENT BIDDLE.

NEW YORK, 20 July, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

The first request of this letter is that you would burn it as soon as you have read it, and keep the contents to yourself; at least for the present.

Some months ago farms lately in the tenure of Mr. Abel James were advertised for sale by you and Mr.

Henry Drinker. These farms I have seen; but not, it is to be acknowledged with the eyes of a Purchaser. The one near Frankfort you inform the public contains 284 acres, that another called Callender's contains 79 acres, and a third, near the last, contains upwards of 60 acres.

Let me now ask if all or any of these are yet for sale? What is the *lowest* price that would be taken for each? and whether payment would be received in valuable lands, improved, in the counties of Fayette and Washington in the State of Pennsylvania.

One tract of which in Fayette-county, contains between sixteen and 1700 acres *on* the great road from Fort Cumberland to Pittsburg, distant 75 miles from the former and 40 from the latter place; equal in quality to any tract in that country, with what has been a very valuable mill and iron ore adjoining, but which is now much out of repair. The other tract (containing upwards of 3000 acres) lyes about sixteen miles from Pittsburg and is also good in quality, and more level than usual.

I shall candidly declare that to pay money is out of the question with me—I have none and would not if it was to be had, run in debt to borrow—nor would it do for me to dispose of *real* property to obtain it, when that species of property is brought to low ebb and dull market.[1] An exchange, as proposed, if ready

[1] "To be instrumental, in any degree to the accomplishment of the object, which is mentioned in your letter, would, I do assure you, give me pleasure; but with truth I can add that I know no person who has either money to lend or who seems willing to part with it. The most conclusive proof of which I

money is not indispensable, might be mutually advantageous to both parties, in as much as the probability is, that the price of the exterior will increase in a full ratio with that of the interior lands.

If the farms advertised by you and Mr. Drinker are sold, or if they are not *now* for sale, let me next ask if they will be to be rented? and for what? I ask these questions however more from motives of curiosity than from any expectation of becoming the Renter of either of them; because the principal buildings (which would be of little value to me, in this case) might considerably enhance the rent, and because my objects being for the amusement of farming, and for the benefit arising from exercise (the distance from the city being convenient for the latter), I should not incline to lay out much money upon a rented farm, for a short tenure; and for a long one I should have no occasion for a place in that way. Having communicated the matter thus far to you, I will, in a few words add, as my own opinion, strengthened by those of my Physicians, that my late change from active scenes, to which I had been accustomed, and in which the mind has been agreeably amused, to the

shall give you: I was much in want of a sum, to answer some call upon me, which I did not care to have unsatisfied, when I set out for New York the Spring before last; but was unable to obtain more than half of it, (though it was not much I required,) and this at an advanced interest with other rigid conditions. After this I took an occasion to sound Mr. Carroll of Carrollton, as the most likely, being the most monied man, I was acquainted with—but without success—He assured me that he could not collect the *interest* of the money that had been loaned, by his father and himself, and his other resources were not *more* than adequate to his own occasions—thenceforward I made no further attempts, not knowing indeed where to apply."—*Washington to Charles Carter*, 14 September, 1790.

one of inactivity which I now lead, and where the thoughts are continually on the stretch, has been the cause of more illness and severe attacks of my constitution within the last twelve months, than I had undergone in 30 years preceding put together. A deviation therefore is necessary. I have not, because you were one from whom the terms of sale of James's lands were to be known, scrupled to make these communications at the moment that I ask the *lowest* price that would be taken for each of these farms. Frankly, I declare it to be my intention not to give a high price for either of them (depreciated as real property is) nor will I higgle about the price. If it is moderate and I am dealt with candidly, I will say in a word whether it will suit me to become a purchaser—chaffering I shall avoid. The largest farm would be most congenial to my wishes—perhaps one of the others might do. I am, &c.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

NEW YORK, 11 August, 1790.

MY DEAR MARQUIS,

I have received your affectionate letter of the 17th of March by one conveyance, and the token of victory[1] gained by liberty over despotism by another, for both which testimonials of your friendship and regard I pray you to accept my sincerest thanks. In this great subject of triumph for the new world, and for humanity in general, it will never be forgotten

[1] Key of the Bastile, sent through Thomas Paine, at this time an ardent believer in the revolution.

how conspicuous a part you bore, and how much lustre you reflected on a country in which you made the first displays of character.[1]

Happy am I, my good friend, that, amidst all the tremendous tempests, which have assailed your political ship, you have had address and fortitude enough to steer her hitherto safely through the quicksands and rocks which threatened instant destruction on every side, and that your young King in all things seems so well disposed to conform to the wishes of the nation. In such an important, such a hazardous voyage, when every thing dear and sacred is embarked, you know full well my best wishes have never left you for a moment. Yet I will avow that the accounts we received through the English papers, which were sometimes our only channels for information, caused our fears of a failure almost to exceed our expectations of success.

How much will the concerned be indebted to the exertions of the principal pilot, when the ship shall, at the end of her dangerous course, be securely harbored in the haven of national tranquillity, freedom, and glory, to which she is destined, and which I hope she is near attaining.

Congress, after having been in session ever since last fall, are to adjourn in two or three days. Though

[1] "Give me leave, my dear General, to present you with a picture of the Bastille just as it looked a few days after I had ordered its demolition, with the main key of the fortress of despotism. It is a tribute which I owe as a son to my adopted father, as an aid-de-camp to my general, as a missionary of liberty to its patriarch."—*Lafayette to Washington*, 17 March, 1790.

The key of the Bastile is still preserved in the mansion-house at Mount Vernon. The drawing was sold at auction in Philadelphia in 1871.

they have been much perplexed and delayed in their proceedings on some questions of a local and intricate nature, yet they have done a great deal of important business, and will leave the public affairs in as satisfactory a state as could reasonably have been expected. One of the last acts of the executive has been the conclusion of a treaty of peace and friendship with the Creek nation of Indians, who have been considerably connected with the Spanish provinces, and hostile to the Georgian frontiers since the war with Great Britain.[1] McGillivray and about thirty of the kings and head men are here. This event will leave us in peace from one end of our borders to the other, except where it may be interrupted by a small refugee banditti of Cherokees and Shawnees, who can be easily chastised, or even extirpated, if it shall become necessary. But this will only be done in an inevitable extremity, since the basis of our proceedings with the Indian nations has been, and shall be, *justice* during the period in which I have any thing to do with the administration of this government.

Our negotiations and transactions, though many of them are on a small scale as to the objects, ought to be governed by the immutable principles of equity, as much as your European politics, which are more extended in their compass. How your wars proceed

[1] The treaty was important "as drawing a line between the Creeks and Georgia, and enabling the government to do, as it will do, justice against either party offending."—*Jefferson to Randolph*, 14 August, 1790. The treaty was attacked by Jackson, one of the Georgia delegation, as sacrificing the recognized claims of that State.

in the north, or in whose favor they are likely to terminate, what probability there may be, that the misunderstandings between Britain and Spain should issue in an open rupture, and what other powerful nations, in that event, will be drawn in to take an active part on one side or the other, are subjects of vast magnitude, on which we, in these distant regions, must abstain from deciding positively, even in our minds, until we shall have more unequivocal data to go upon. It seems to be our policy to keep in the situation, in which nature has placed us, to observe a strict neutrality, and to furnish others with those good things of subsistence, which they may want, and which our fertile land abundantly produces, if circumstances and events will permit us so to do.[1]

[1] The Spaniards had seized and looted a British vessel at Nootka Sound, on the ground of trespassing on Spanish territory, and were unwilling to make reparation. As Spain would be anxious to secure the aid, or at least the neutrality, of the United States in the event of war, for the protection of her American possessions, Washington thought this a fitting opportunity to open negotiations at Madrid for the opening of the Mississippi. Humphreys was sent to co-operate with Carmichael in this negotiation, and the influence of France was to be invoked; but before the envoy reached Madrid an agreement had been arrived at between the two powers, and the fears or interest of Spain could no longer be worked upon to secure the coveted privilege.

When the first indications of the difference between Spain and Great Britain appeared, Major George Beckwith sounded the American executive on the attitude that the United States would assume, and learned that there was no alliance that would lead them to favor Spain. Washington thought that in the prospective war Great Britain would attack the Spanish colonies in America from Canada, and interpreted the mission of Beckwith as follows: "We [Great Britain] did not incline to give any satisfactory answer to Mr. Morris, who was *officially* commissioned to ascertain our intentions with respect to the evacuation of the western posts within the territory of the United States and other matters into which he was empowered to enquire, till by this unauthenticated mode we can discover whether you will enter into an alliance with us and

This letter is committed to Colonel Humphreys to carry to London, whither he is going. Should he by any accident be in France, he will be able to give you a full state of our affairs and prospects. Gradually recovering from the distresses in which the war left us, patiently advancing in our task of civil government, unentangled in the crooked policies of Europe, wanting scarcely any thing but the free navigation of

make common cause against Spain. In that case we will enter into a commercial treaty with you, and *promise perhaps* to fulfil what they [we] already stand engaged to perform."—*Diary*, 1790.

On the 27th of August the President communicated the following statement and queries to the several members of the Cabinet, and to the Vice-President and Chief Justice:

"Provided the dispute between Great Britain and Spain should come to the decision of arms, from a variety of circumstances (individually unimportant and inconclusive, but very much the reverse when compared and combined), there is no doubt in my mind, that New Orleans, and the Spanish posts above it on the Mississippi, will be among the first attempts of the former, and that the reduction of them will be undertaken by a combined operation from Detroit.

"The *consequences* of having so formidable and enterprising a people as the British on both our flanks and rear, with their navy in front, as they respect our western settlements, which may be reduced thereby, and as they regard the security of the Union and its commerce with the West Indies, are too obvious to need enumeration.

"What then should be the answers of the Executive of the United States to Lord Dorchester, in case he should apply for permission to march troops through the territory of the said States from Detroit to the Mississippi?

"What notice ought to be taken of the measure, if it should be undertaken without leave, which is the most probable proceeding of the two?"

A difference of opinion prevailed in the Cabinet. On one side it was advised that permission to march troops through the territory should be pointedly refused, and, if persisted in afterwards, that a remonstrance should be made to the Court of Great Britain. On the other side it was recommended to grant the request; but, if the march should be attempted without leave, and after prohibition, that it should be "opposed and prevented at every risk and hazard." The principles of national law and the practice of nations were discussed, and brought to bear on the point. The general result, as recorded by Washington, was to "treat the communications of Major Beckwith very civilly; to intimate,

the Mississippi (which we must have, and as certainly shall have as we remain a nation), I have supposed, that, with the undeviating exercise of a just, steady, and prudent national policy, we shall be the gainers, whether the powers of the old world may be in peace or war, but more especially in the latter case. In that case, our importance will certainly increase, and our friendship be courted. Our dispositions would not be indifferent to Britain or Spain. Why will not Spain be wise and liberal at once? It would be easy to annihilate all causes of quarrels between that nation and the United States at this time. At a future period, that may be far from being a fact. Should a war take place between Great Britain and Spain, I conceive, from a great variety of concurring circumstances, there is the highest probability that the Floridas will soon be in the possession of the former. Adieu, my dear Marquis. Believe me to be assuredly and affectionately your friend, &c.

P. S. Not for the value of the thing, my dear Marquis, but as a memorial, and because they are the manufacture of this city, I send you herewith a pair of shoe-buckles.

delicately, that they carried no marks official or authentic, nor in speaking of alliance, did they convey any definite meaning by which the precise object of the British Cabinet could be discovered. In a word, that the Secretary of the Treasury was to extract as much as he could from Major Beckwith, and to report to me, without committing, by any assurances whatever, the Government of the United States, leaving it entirely free to pursue, unreproached, such a line of conduct in the dispute as her interest (and honor) shall dictate."

The full history of this incident is related in the editor's *The United States and Spain in 1790*.

TO HENRY KNOX, SECRETARY OF WAR.

NEW YORK, 13 August, 1790.

SIR,

The session of Congress having closed, and it being my intention to go to Virginia as soon as the public business will permit, and wishing, during my absence from the seat of government, to have my mind as free from public cares as circumstances will allow, I am desirous of having such matters as may, by law or otherwise, require the agency or sanction of the President of the United States, brought to view before my departure. I therefore request, that you will cause such business, within your department, as may be necessary to receive the aid or approbation of the President, to be submitted to me, as soon as its nature will permit; particularly regulations for trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, agreeably to the act; and information and opinions on the following points—

Whether any other and what steps shall be taken with them to restrain their hostilities.

Whether the orders given, and measures adopted, are adequate to the peace of the western frontiers. If not, what further is to be done for this purpose?

Upon the expediency and policy of a proclamation forbidding encroachments upon the territory of the Indians, or treating with them contrary to the law lately passed. Instructions for the governor of the ceded territory south of the Ohio. Where ought the governor to reside? What notice should be taken of the insult offered to Major Doughty? What steps

should be taken with respect to his recommendation of a post at the mouth of the Tennessee?

Other measures than those pursued by the present contractors for supplying the western posts ought to be adopted, that the troops in that country may be more efficiently employed in sudden emergencies, and the posts better secured. Have any orders been given concerning the condemned soldiers? I am, Sir, &c.[1]

[1] Congress adjourned on the 12th of August, and Washington took the opportunity to visit Rhode Island, where he did not touch on his Eastern tour, because that State had not then acceded to the Union. A short sketch of this visit was made by William Smith, a member of Congress from South Carolina, who accompanied the President's party for a part of the journey, and, as this record is but little known, I give the main points:

The party set off on the 15th, on board a Rhode Island packet, and reached Newport on Tuesday morning (17th). "As we entered the harbor, a salute was fired from the fort and some pieces on the wharves; at our landing we were received by the principal inhabitants of the town, and the clergy, who, forming a procession, escorted us through a considerable concourse of citizens to the lodgings which had been prepared for us; the most respectable inhabitants were there severally presented to the President by Mr. Marchant, Judge of the District Court.

"The President then took a walk around the town and the heights above it, accompanied by the gentlemen of the party and a large number of gentlemen of Newport. We returned to our lodgings, and at four o'clock the gentlemen waited again on the President, and we all marched in procession to the Town Hall or State House, where, while dinner was serving up, a number of gentlemen were presented. The dinner was well dished, and conducted with regularity and decency; the company consisted of about eighty persons; after dinner some good toasts were drank; among others, following: 'May the last be first,' in allusion to Rhode Island, being the last State which ratified the Constitution. The President gave 'The Town of Newport,' and as soon as he withdrew, Judge Marchant gave 'The man we love,' which the company drank standing. The company then followed the President in another walk which he took around the town. He passed by Judge Marchant's, and drank a glass of wine, and then went to his lodgings, which closed the business of the day. I slept in the room with Governor Clinton.

"Wednesday, 18th. Immediately after breakfast, addresses were presented by the clergy and the town of Newport. That of the latter, by a committee,

TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

MOUNT VERNON, 10 October, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter of the 30th ultimo duly came to hand with its enclosures. For the information contained in it I thank you. The motives, however, by which the author of the communication to you was actuated, although they *may* have been pure, and in that case praiseworthy, do also (but it may be uncharitable to

the chairman of which, Judge Marchant, began to read the address, but before he had proceeded far he was so agitated he had to resign it to Col. Sherbet, who read it very composedly. We then formed another long procession down to the wharf, and embarked for Providence. . . . We had a tedious passage to Providence, being seven hours in performing it. The same salute took place as at Newport, but the procession up to the tavern was more solemn and conducted with a much greater formality, having troops and music. The Governor of the State was so zealous in his respects that he jumped aboard the packet as soon as she got to the wharf to welcome the President to Providence. The President, with the Governor of the State on his right hand, and Mr. Forster, a Senator in Congress from Rhode Island, on his left, moved in the front ranks; then followed Governor Clinton, Mr. Jefferson (the Secretary of State for the United States), Mr. Blair (a judge of the Supreme Federal Court), myself, and the three gentlemen of the President's family, viz., Col. Humphreys, Maj. Jackson, and Mr. Nelson—who formed the party—afterward followed the principal inhabitants of Providence and some from Newport, and other citizens, making a long file, preceded by some troops and music; the doors and windows for the length of a mile were all crowded with ladies and spectators. When we arrived at the tavern (Dagget's) the President stood at the door, and the troops and procession passed and saluted. In the procession were three negro scrapers making a horrible noise. We then sat down to a family dinner. After tea, just as the President was taking leave to go to bed, he was informed by Col. Peck (Marshal of the District, who had sailed with us from New York), that the students of the college had illuminated it, and would be highly flattered at the President's going to see it, which he politely agreed to do, though he never goes out at night, and it then rained a little, and was a disagreeable night. We now made a nocturnal procession to the college, which indeed was worth seeing, being very splendidly illuminated. . . .

"Thursday morning began with a heavy rain and cold, easterly wind. It cleared at nine o'clock, and then the President, accompanied as before, began

harbour the suspicion) admit of a different interpretation, and by an easy and pretty direct clue may be developed.[1]

We are approaching the first Monday in December by hasty strides. I pray you, therefore, to revolve in your mind such matters as may be proper

a walk which continued until one o'clock and which completely fatigued the company which formed his escort. We walked all around the Town, visited all the apartments of the college, went on the roof to view the beautiful and extensive prospect, walked to a place where a large Indiaman of 900 tons was on the stocks, went on board her, returned to town, stopped and drank wine and punch at Mr. Clarke's, Mr. Brown's, Gov. Turner's, and Gov. Bowen's, and then returned home. As soon as the President was rested, he received the addresses of the Cincinnati, the Rhode Island Colleges, and the Town of Providence, and then went immediately to dinner to the Town Hall. The dinner was attended by 200 persons, and an immense crowd surrounded the hall. After dinner several toasts were drank; the second was 'The President of the United States,' at which the whole company within and without gave three huzzas and a long clapping of hands. The President then rose and drank the health of all the company; he afterward gave 'The Town of Providence.' . . . At the conclusion of the toasts, the President rose, and the whole company, with a considerable crowd of citizens, walked down to the wharf, where he and his suite embarked for New York."

On Monday, August 30th, the President and suite set out from New York for the south.

[1] Acting upon a suggestion from the English Cabinet, Lord Dorchester sent Major George Beckwith to Philadelphia to sound the Executive upon the attitude of the United States in the event of a war between Great Britain and Spain. The results of this informal mission were communicated to Dorchester, and Beckwith was retained at Philadelphia, as the unrecognized diplomatic agent of the British government, a convenience while no regular minister had been appointed. In this capacity he had approached Hamilton with hints that Gouverneur Morris in his informal mission, was not so discreet as he might be, as he was in too close intimacy with the French Minister in London (Luzerne), and had given offence to the court by consorting with the opposition party, of which Fox was the leader.—*Hamilton's Works* (Lodge), iv., 49. *Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris*, i., 310 *et seq.*

In reply Mr. Hamilton said: "It is certainly very possible, that motives, different from the one avowed, may have produced a certain communication; and in matters of such a nature it is not only allowable, but the dictate of prudence, to receive suggestions with peculiar caution."—October 17th.

for me to lay before Congress, not only in your own department, (if any there be,) but such others of a general nature, as may happen to occur to you, that I may be prepared to open the session with such communications, as shall appear to merit attention. With sincere regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO TOBIAS LEAR.

MOUNT VERNON, 14 November, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

Having wrote two letters to you on the subject of Page's stage coach one or the other of which if not both, it is presumable have got to hand before this can, I shall add nothing more thereto than that Page's coach is *now* [my] dependence.

I am, I must confess, exceedingly unwilling to go into any house without first knowing on what terms I do it, and wish that this sentiment could be again hinted, in delicate terms, to the parties concerned with me. I cannot, if there are no latent motives which govern in this case, see any difficulty in the business.[2] *Mr. Morris* has most assuredly formed an idea of what ought, in equity, to be the rent of the

[1] *From Mr. Hamilton's Reply :* "The subject suggested in your letter, as preparatory to the meeting of the legislature, shall engage my particular attention. The papers of the departments of state and the treasury, and of the commissioners for settling accounts, are on their way to Philadelphia. On the 20th I propose with my family to set out for the same place."

[2] Relating to a house in Philadelphia, belonging to Mr. Morris, which was fitting up for the residence of the President, when Congress should remove to that place. Mr. Lear was in Philadelphia making preparation for the President's arrival and accommodation.

tenement in the condition he left it; and with this aid the committee ought, I conceive, to be as little at a loss in determining what it should rent for, with the additions and alterations, which are about to be made, and which ought to be done in a *plain* and *neat*, not by any means in an extravagant style; because the latter is not only contrary to my wish, but would really be detrimental to my interest and convenience, principally because it would be the means of keeping me out of the use and comforts of the house to a late period, and because the furniture, and every thing else, would require to be accordant therewith; besides it 's making me pay an extravagant price, perhaps accommodate the alterations to the taste of another, or to the exorbitant rates of workmen or their blended performances in the two houses.

I do not know, nor do I believe, that any thing unfair is intended by either Mr. Morris or the committee; but let us for a moment suppose, that the rooms (the new ones I mean) was to be hung with tapestry, or a very rich and costly paper, neither of which would suit my present furniture; that costly ornaments for the bow windows, extravagant chimney-pieces, &c., &c., were to be provided; that workmen, from extravagance of the times, for every twenty shillings' worth of work would charge forty shillings; and that advantage should be taken of the occasion to new paint every part of the house, buildings, &c.; would there be any propriety in adding ten or twelve and a half per cent. for all this to the

rent of the house in its original state for the two years that I am to hold it? If the solution of these questions is in the negative, wherein lies the difficulty of determining, that the houses and lots when finished according to the proposed plan ought to rent for so much? When all is done that can be done thereto the residence will not be so commodious as the house I left in New York; (with the additional buildings made there) for there (and the want of it will be found a real inconvenience at Mr. Morris's) my office was in a front room below, where persons on business were at once admitted; whereas now they will have to ascend two pair of stairs, and to pass by the public rooms to get to it. Notwithstanding which, I am willing to allow as much as was paid to Mr. Macomb, and shall say nothing if more is demanded, unless there is apparent extortion.—Extortion if it should be intended by delay is to see to what height rents will rise, I should be unwilling to —and to take it at the expense of any public body, I will not.[1] There is one expression in your letter of the 4th the meaning of which I do not clearly understand, viz.: "the additions, repairs, &c., of the house in which Mr. Morris now lives are likewise to be comprehended in the expenditure to be refunded by the rent of the house." Is it meant by this that the rent of the house you are now in is to be increased by the expenditures on the one Mr. Morris

[1] In transcribing, some words or lines appear to have been omitted. The letter is printed as transcribed by William Jackson, one of Washington's Secretaries.

has removed to, or is no more meant by it than that the rent of the former is intended as security for the refund. The latter may be very proper, but the former could be submitted to on no other ground than that of dire necessity.

I had rather have heard, that my repaired coach was plain and elegant, than rich and elegant.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

TO HENRY KNOX, SECRETARY OF WAR.

[PRIVATE.]

MOUNT VERNON, 19 November, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have received your letter of the 10th inst., and will declare to you without reserve that my forebodings with respect to the Expedition against the Wabash Indians are of disappointment; and a disgraceful termination under the conduct of Brigadier General Harmar.—

I expected *little* from the moment I heard he was a *drunkard.*—I expected *less* as soon as I heard that on *this account* no confidence was reposed in him by the people of the Western Country.—And I gave up *all hope* of success, as soon as I heard that there were disputes with *him* about command.—

The latter information is from report *only;* but the report of *bad* news is rarely without foundation. —If the issue of this Expedition is honorable to the Concerters of it, and favorable to our arms, it will be *double* pleasing to me; but my mind, from the silence

which reigns, and other circumstances, is prepared for the worst ;—that is—for expence without honor or profit.—[1]

If any thing *more* than the statement of *this* business for the information of Congress should occur to you, previous to my arrival, be so good as to digest it, for it is my wish to have every matter which may occur to the heads of Departments as well as to

[1] "Your favor of the 26th ultimo came to my hands last night. If the information of Captain Brant be true, the issue of the expedition against the Indians will indeed prove unfortunate and disgraceful to the troops, who suffered themselves to be ambuscaded.

"The relation of this event carries with it, I must confess, the complexion of truth ; yet I will suspend my opinion until I hear something more of the matter. The force, which was employed against these hostile Indians, or the drawing out of which was authorized, ought not to have regarded a thousand of them, because it was calculated for, and undertaken under the expectation of, meeting a larger number, if blows were to terminate the dispute.

"It gives me pleasure to learn from you the friendly sentiments of Captain Brant ; and with you I think they merit cultivation ; but he has not been candid in his account of the conduct of General St. Clair, nor done justice in his representation of matters at Muskingham. It is notorious, that he used all the art and influence, of which he was possessed, to prevent any treaty being held ; and that, except in a small degree, General St. Clair aimed at no more land by the treaty of Muskingham, than had been ceded by the preceding treaties."—*Washington to Governor Clinton*, 1 December, 1790.

On the outbreaks by the Indians on the frontiers, St. Clair collected a motley force of about fourteen hundred men, badly armed and poorly disciplined, and divided by the jealousies of the officers. One division under John Hardin, was surprised and defeated ; a subsequent advantage did much to retrieve his reputation, but this advantage was not followed up, and the destruction of some Indian villages was the chief result of the expedition. The Indians become bolder, and more serious operations were planned by the general government.

"I am apprehensive that Governor St. Clair's communication of the object of the expedition to the officer commanding at Detroit, has been unseasonable, and may have unfavorable consequences. It was certainly premature to announce the operation intended until the troops were ready to move, since the Indians through that channel, might receive such information as would frustrate the expedition."—*Washington to Knox*, 4 November, 1790.

myself, ready, if proper to lay before that body, at the opening of the Session.

With sincere friendship, &c.

P. S. I expect to commence my journey for Philadelphia on Monday [1]—but from the state of the Roads after the incessant and heavy rains which have fallen, my progress must be slow.—

TO GEORGE STEPTOE WASHINGTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 5 December, 1790.

DEAR GEORGE,

Agreeably to the promise, which I gave to you in Virginia, I have made the necessary inquiries respecting the course of studies and expenses, which would enable you and your brother Lawrence to finish your education at the college in this place, provided you are masters of those books and studies, which you informed me you had passed through.

The enclosed account of studies and expenses, which I wish you to return to me, you will see is under the hand of the Reverend Dr. Smith, provost of the college, and may therefore be relied upon for its accuracy. After you and Lawrence have carefully perused and well considered the enclosed statement, I wish you to determine whether you will come or not. If your determination should be in favor of coming on, I must impress this upon you both in the strongest manner, namely, that you come with good

[1] Philadelphia was now the seat of government.

dispositions, and full resolution to pursue your studies closely, conform to the established rules and customs of the college, and to conduct yourselves on all occasions with decency and propriety.

To you, George, I would more particularly address myself at this time, as from your advanced age it may be presumed, that such advice, as I am about to give, will make a deeper impression upon you, than upon your brother, and your conduct may very probably mark the line of his; but, at the same time, Lawrence must remember, that this is equally applicable to him.

Should you enter upon the course of studies here marked out, you must consider it as the finishing of your education, and, therefore, as the time is limited, that every hour misspent is lost for ever, and that future *years* cannot compensate for lost *days* at this period of your life. This reflection must show the necessity of an unremitting application to your studies. To point out the importance of circumspection in your conduct, it may be proper to observe, that a good moral character is the first essential in a man, and that the habits contracted at your age are generally indelible, and your conduct here may stamp your character through life. It is therefore highly important, that you should endeavor not only to be learned, but virtuous. Much more might be said to show the necessity of application and regularity; but when you must know, that without them you can never be qualified to render service to your country, assistance to your friends, or consolation to your

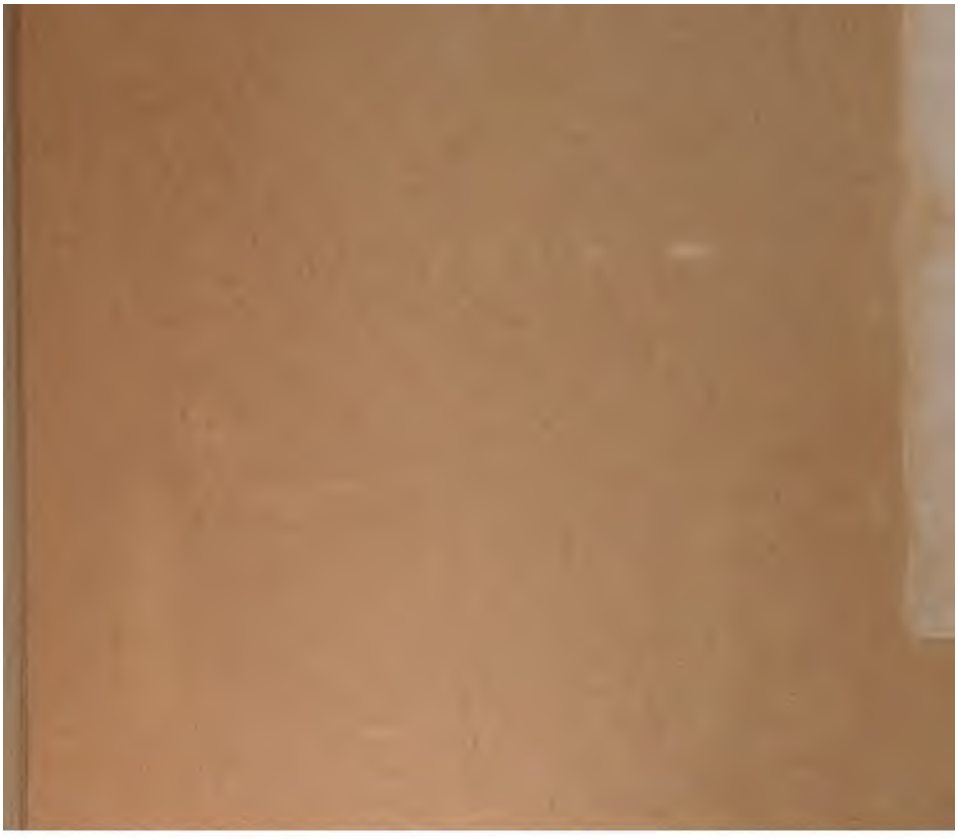
retired moments, nothing further need be said to prove their utility.

As to your clothing, it will, I presume, cost much the same here as in Alexandria. I shall always wish to see you clothed decently and becoming your stations; but I shall ever discountenance extravagance or foppishness in your dress. At all times, and upon all occasions, I shall be happy to give you both such marks of my approbation, as your progress and good conduct merit.

If you determine to come on, you had better do it immediately, and Major Washington will furnish you with such money as may be necessary for the stage and expenses from Alexandria to this place. But I must repeat what I have before enjoined, that you come with good dispositions and determined resolutions to conform to establishments and pursue your studies.

Your aunt joins me in love to you both, and best wishes to Dr. Craik and family. I am, dear George, your sincere friend and affectionate uncle.

END OF VOL. XI.



308
W318
v.11

FEB 16 '65

Stanford University Library
Stanford, California

In order that others may use this book, please return it as soon as possible, but not later than the date due.